ACPL ITEM
DISCARDED

798.22 G57
Goldschmidt 289681
STORAGE
Bridle wise

PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE AND ALLEN COUNTY, IND.

DO NOT REMOVE
CARD FROM POCKET

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 00435 3519

ANNEX

19 Jul '41
13 Oct '4
24 Nov '4
19 Jul '42
26 Aug '4
27 Oct '43
11 Feb '44
25 Feb '44

BRIDLE WISE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017

https://archive.org/details/bridlewisekeytob00gold

BRIDLE WISDOM.

BRIDLE WISE

A Key to BETTER HUNTERS
—BETTER PONIES

798.22
G57

By

LIEUT.-COLONEL S. G. GOLDSCHMIDT

With Plates by

LIONEL EDWARDS

COUNTRY LIFE, LTD.
20 TAVISTOCK STREET, LONDON
NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

First published in June, 1927
Second impression December, 1927

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

289681

"'What's bridle wise?' said the young mule. 'By the Blue Gums of the Back Blocks:' snorted the troop-horse, 'do you mean to say that you aren't taught to be bridle wise in your business? How can you do anything, unless you can spin round at once when the rein is pressed on your neck? It means life or death to your man and, of course, that's life or death to you. Get round with your hind legs under you the instant you feel the rein on your neck. If you haven't room to swing round, rear up a little and come round on your hind legs. That's being bridle wise.'"

By kind permission of MR. RUDYARD KIPLING.
From "Her Majesty's Servants" (*The Jungle Book*).

MAY 8 1936

OF ALL MY FRIENDS
WHOM I HAVE BORED WITH MY BOOK,
TO THE ONE WHO NEVER
SHOWED RESENTMENT

PREFACE

I HOPE that it will not be imagined that "Bridle Wise" is a mere textbook for horse-breakers as such. My belief is that no man who lacks the ability to share to some extent in the schooling of his horses, and also to keep them up to the mark, can ever become a horseman; moreover, he is doomed to disappointment, both from the point of view of pleasure and pocket. No hunter or polo pony will suit him so well as the one in whose education he has had some part.

The demand for hunters with good manners is insistent, and this, together with the increased speed of polo, makes it necessary to revise our methods of schooling.

This book may be regarded as a reasoned plea for the revival of the old system of English equitation, which insisted on balance and control in a saddle-horse, *combined with the utmost freedom of forward movement*. Control without freedom is as valueless as freedom without control.

The principle I lay down is that a horse's general education—*i.e.*, "bridle wisdom"—*must* precede his special education for hunting and polo.

I wish there was a way of conveying my appreciation to many helpers in this my first effort, and to the small army of accomplished horsemen, my masters, to whom I owe so much, both for precept and example.

I should have liked to dedicate this book "To the horse-loving public," not without the hope that it might occur to some of this public to buy, but it is explained to me that presentation copies might be expected! I therefore hastily amend my idea and substitute the following: "Of all my friends whom I have bored with my book, to the one who never showed resentment."

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE - - - - - - - - - vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTORY - - - - - - - - 1

The necessity for a system of step by step breaking—The necessity for a rider to be a horse breaker in some degree.

II. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HORSE - - - - - - 7

Seeking safety in flight—The instinct of self-preservation—Association of ideas—Punishment and reward.

III. THE HANDLING OF THE YOUNG HORSE - - - - - 16

IV. LONG-REIN DRIVING - - - - - - - - 19

V. MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING - - - - - - - 27

VI. BITS AND BITTING - - - - - - - - 32

VII. TEACHING A HORSE TO OBEY THE AIDS - - - - - 37

Introductory—Preliminary instruction—Lateral equitation—Teaching the horse to obey the leg—Turning on the fore-hand, dismounted—Turning on the fore-hand, mounted—The passage and direct flexion—The canter—The rein back.

VIII. SCHOOL MOVEMENTS - - - - - - - - 58

The incline—The incline, using half the width of the school—The incline, using quarter the width of the school—The incline, using the end of the school—The change of hand by means of right angle turns—Circling.

IX. THE HUNTER - - - - - - - - - 61

General description of a good hunter—The hunter as a hack—Covert-side manners—Schooling to jump—Jumping schools—First appearance with hounds—Refusing—Riding at a jump.

X. THE POLO PONY - - - - - - - - - 77

Conformation—Its relation to temperament in the polo pony—Further schooling for the polo pony—Teaching the pony to go with the slack rein—Teaching the pony to jump round on his hocks—Finishing the pony's school education—Further schooling in the open—Schooling to stick and ball—Introducing the pony to the game.

CHAPTER PAGE

XI. Special Training for the Show-Ring - - - - 97

XII. Fighting it Out - - - - - - - - 102

Napping, rearing and jibbing—Shying—Bolting—Bucking—Kicking—Plunging—Tongue over bit—Throwing the head up and down—Refusing—Shying off the ball—Jogging instead of walking.

XIII. Stable Management - - - - - - 114

XIV. Hints on Buying Horses and Ponies - - - - 119

XV. Cruelty in Training and Sport - - - - - 131

XVI. "The Eye of the Master" - - - - - 135

XVII. Horsy Terms not Generally Understood - - - 141

A good seat—Aids—Hands—Leg, heel and spur—Dropping the hand—Behind the bit—Pulling—Direct and lateral flexions—Bridle wise—The bars of the mouth—Horizontal equilibrium—The passage—Leading correctly—Shying—Nappy—Jibbing—A good mouth—Star-gazing—A spoilt pony—Quiet with hounds—Forging—Freshness (getting above himself) — Defences—Lateral equitation—Diagonal equitation—Lunging—*Haute école* riding—Mouthing—Jogging out in hand—Dishing—Plaiting—Breaking out in the stable.

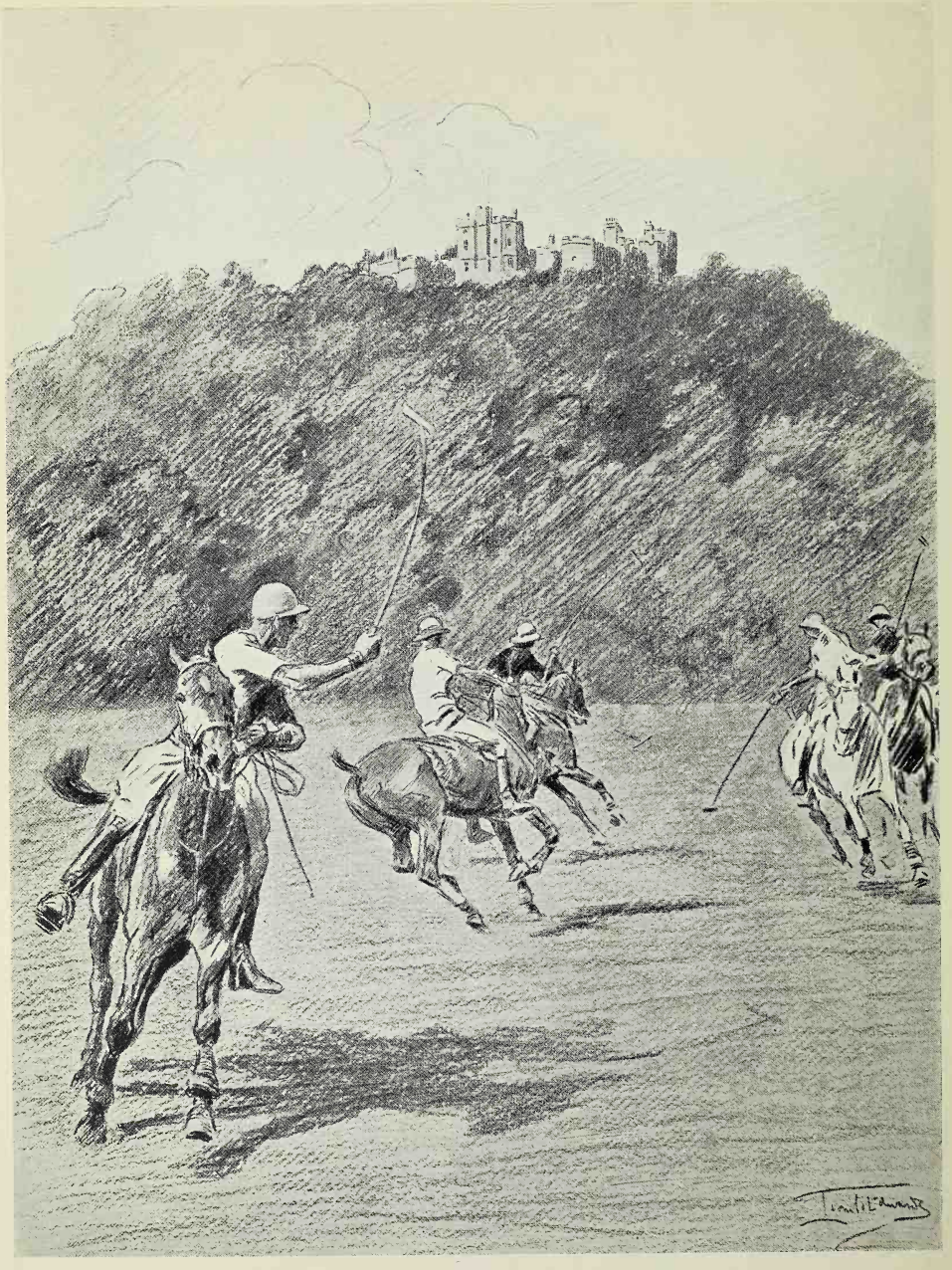
Index - - - - - - - - 159

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE			
	BRIDLE WISDOM	*Frontispiece*	
I.	THE FINISHED ARTICLE	*Facing page*	1
II.	RIDING IS GENUINELY TAUGHT IN THE ARMY	,, ,,	2
III.	THERE IS A GREAT RELUCTANCE OF THE PONY TO PLAY NEAR THE BOARDS	,, ,,	10
IV.	THE RESULT MAY BE IMAGINED	,, ,,	12
V.	A FRESH HORSE ON A TARRED ROAD	,, ,,	19
VI.	PREPARATIONS IN THE LOOSE-BOX	,, ,,	27
VII.	CARELESS GIRTHING	,, ,,	28
VIII.	UNCONSCIOUSLY USING HAND AND LEG IN PERFECT UNISON	,, ,,	40
IX.	HE MUST TREAD WARILY TO AVOID A FALL	,, ,,	61
X.	HE STOPS AND GLARES AT EVERY DITCH AS IF HE EXPECTED THE DEVIL HIMSELF TO POP OUT	,, ,,	62
XI.	HE MUST BE TRAINED TO STAND QUIETLY AT COVERT-SIDE	,, ,,	68
XII.	THIS FORM OF REFUSAL TENDS TO MAKE ONE UNPOPULAR	,, ,,	70
XIII.	A MÊLÉE	,, ,,	77
XIV.	WHEN A PONY GETS INTO A GAME SPEED SHOULD BE NO NOVELTY TO HIM	,, ,,	86
XV.	SO MUCH CAN BE DONE WHILE UMPIRING TO MAKE THE PONY'S EARLY EXPERIENCE SUCCESSFUL	,, ,,	94
XVI.	SHOWING TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE	,, ,,	98

PLATE			
XVII.	REARING IS THE WORST VICE OF ALL - -	*Facing page*	104
XVIII.	REFUSERS ARE MADE BY INCOMPETENT RIDERS -	,, ,,	110
XIX.	THE SOFTEST BRUSH WILL NEARLY DRIVE THEM MAD	,, ,,	116
XX.	AN OUNCE OF BLOOD IS WORTH AN INCH OF BONE -	,, ,,	124
XXI.	THE WETTER THE SEASON THE HANDIER A PONY MUST BE - - - - - -	,, ,,	126
XXII.	SWALLOWING AS GOSPEL ALL THAT HIS GROOM TELLS HIM - - - - - -	,, ,,	135
XXIII.	THE STABLEMAN NEVER KNOWS WHEN HIS WORK IS DONE - - - - - -	,, ,,	139
XXIV.	STAR-GAZING IS USUALLY DUE TO FAULTY CONFORMATION - - - - - -	,, ,,	152
XXV.	JOGGING OUT IN HAND - - - -	,, ,,	154

NOTE.—*The illustrations in line reproduced in the text are from drawings by Mr. J. McNeill.*



THE FINISHED ARTICLE.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

I HAVE been encouraged to add another book on horses to the many already written, chiefly because my friends say that it would be a pity if the result of a wide experience of over four hundred horses and ponies should remain unrecorded. I have made no claim to saying anything new because horse-breaking is of too great antiquity, and the art as it survives to-day is the accumulated wisdom of the centuries; but I have tried to bring the subject up to date and to produce a work suited to modern requirements. I wish also to write more fully on the psychology of the horse, which has hitherto been dealt with only cursorily or at all events in a somewhat desultory manner.

I am aware that horse-breaking cannot be learned from a book, but the principles underlying the subject can be usefully set down and practical methods can be explained. From these the theory can be studied and the principles understood if it is logically analysed; then, if the student will work on scientific lines, and if he has a firm seat, he will, with unremitting practice, attention to details large and small and, above all, an absorbing interest in the art, learn to break a horse.

As far as I can judge from the literature of the subject, past and current, and from personal observation, there has never been a time when careful explanation of the principles of horse-control was more needed than now. In the days when the older books were written, a knowledge of riding and horsemastership was easy to come by. Young people were brought up amongst horses, which, except for the railway, were then the only means of travel. Nowadays, unless their parents are hunting or polo people, their chance of gaining intimate knowledge of horse-life is remote. Up to the present writers have been men of mature experience and therefore old enough to have learned riding and horsemastership generally, in their youth, before motors became the universal means of locomotion on the road and harness horses and hacks disappeared except from the show-ring. Existing books, excellent as many of them are, do not go deeply enough into the subject, and take for granted an elementary knowledge which the young generation is far from possessing.

Then the civilian riding school has almost disappeared, and this has increased the difficulty of obtaining instruction. The best we can hope

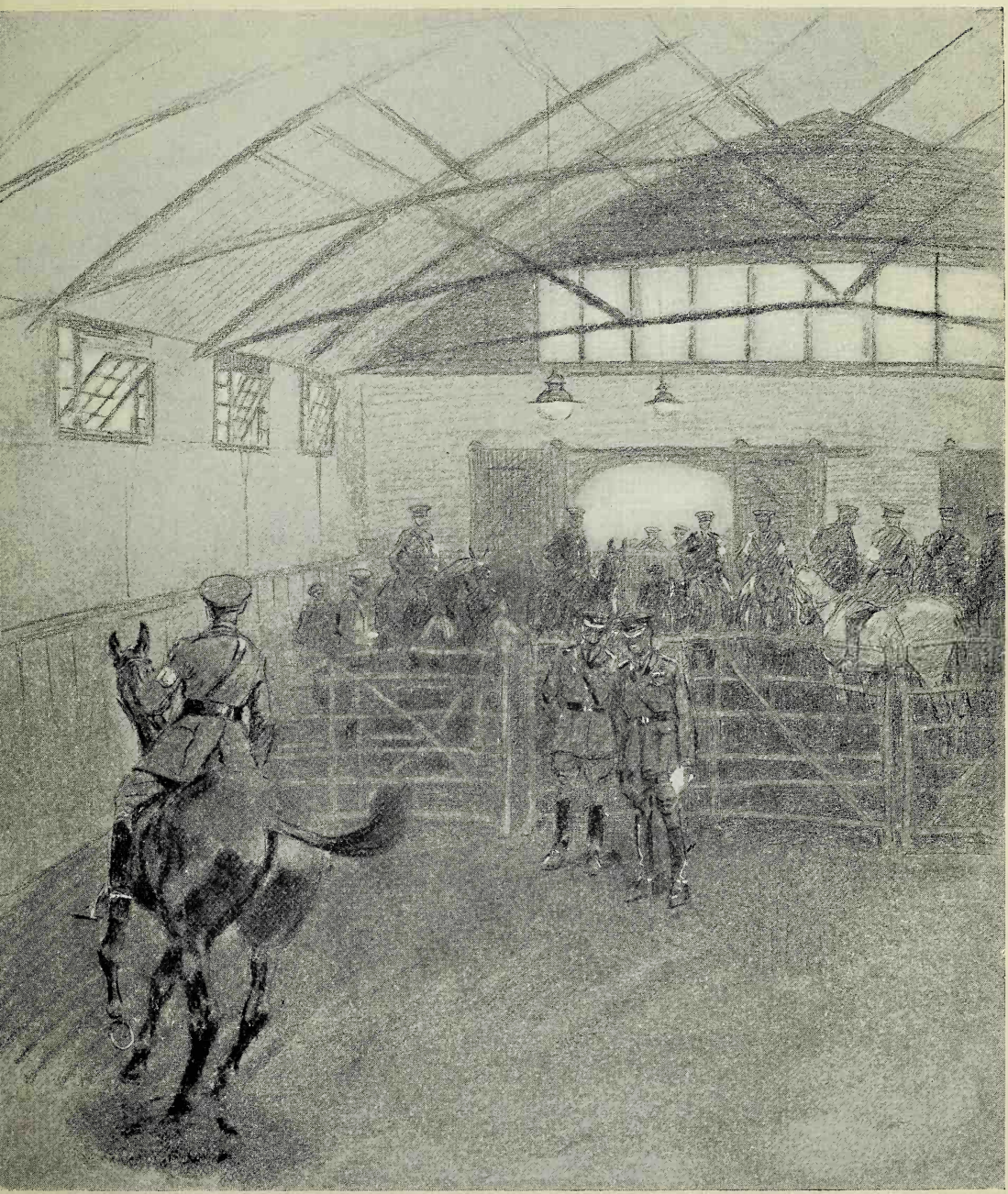
for is that, when they are young, children receive some sort of tuition from the man who happens at the time to be their father's groom, regardless of his proficiency as a rider or his aptitude as a teacher. A pony is bought for the purpose, and this teaching usually takes place in the hunting-field and in the Christmas holidays only. As the boy grows, a bigger pony is bought, and if he is fond of hunting he may be treated to a few days on full-sized hunters, probably hirelings, so that by the time he approaches the twenties he has ridden about half a dozen made horses of one kind or another. He decides to hunt in the winter and to play polo in the summer, and, again, probably indulges in both (certainly at the 'Varsities) on hirelings or on horses and ponies at livery. Girls stand a better chance than boys. They are usually older before they leave home for school, and therefore get a better grounding, have the chance of riding all the year round, and are not forced when in their teens to begin again, as it were, every winter.

There seems, therefore, to be a place for a book to furnish the knowledge which young people must find so difficult to acquire, and to explain what previous writers have assumed to be understood. I am confirmed in this because during the war, when I had to teach the elements of horsemanship and horsemastership to hundreds of drivers and young officers, I was able for the first time to realise the prevailing ignorance and the lack of opportunity.

Then there is now a much greater need for the well-broken horse. Riders have not so much room as formerly, England is more crowded, and, further, slippery roads, motor traffic, wire in fences, all call for a better controlled animal.

The only place where riding and breaking are genuinely taught is in the Army Riding School, and better to-day than formerly, certainly more pleasantly. The old riding-master was a terror to the beginner, and a course of instruction something to be dreaded by the apt and inept alike.

The highest result to which we can attain in horse-breaking is the finished polo pony. The task demanded from him in activity, prompt obedience, and sustained endeavour places him in a class by himself in the horse world. The rider who desires a hunter, charger, or hack can decide for himself the step in the horse's education beyond which it would serve no useful purpose to go. This point varies with the requirements of the rider, and no less with the capabilities—*i.e.*, the conformation—of the horse. What I mean by this is, that while it would be desirable to have all saddle horses as well trained as polo ponies, it would be folly to attempt it with a big, awkward, half-bred animal. Equally it would be courting failure to train a horse to this high pitch for a heavy-handed, loose-seated rider. There is, however, a very limited



RIDING IS GENUINELY TAUGHT IN THE ARMY.

pleasure in riding any animal, whether hunting, hacking, or on parade, whose education has stopped short, to any appreciable extent, of that of a pony correctly prepared for his entry into polo.

About the flat-race horse I have nothing to say. These animals are ridden by abnormally light weights with specialised seats, and, not having myself ridden less than thirteen stone for the last thirty-five years or adopted what is called the American seat, I have no idea how a horse should be broken for these riders. As regards steeplechase horses, I do not presume to teach trainers their business. They are very knowledgeable and skilled experts, and have nothing to learn from an amateur.

As regards show jumping, this branch of the subject has been very fully dealt with in "Horse Sense and Horsemanship" by Colonel Geoffrey Brooke, and I prefer to make no comment further than this: the show jumper is just a performing animal, and show jumping is an adjunct to agricultural shows for the purpose of providing a spectacle that brings in gate money. It has no practical value, and no one looks for a hunter here. The jumping at Dublin Show is a different matter; this course is ridden in hunting style, at hunting speed, and the obstacles are such as one would meet with in the hunting-field.

I wish to add in conclusion that for many years past no one has ever suggested to me a theory, method, or contrivance for overcoming the resistance of the horse and for teaching him obedience to the rider's wishes that I have not tried so long as it was humane, and I have discarded what I have found useless and unnecessary, because they failed to attain their object or proved to be a waste of time. *It is necessary to bear in mind that there exists no bit or other contrivance that can take the place of a reasoned step-by-step course of breaking, and all that a rider can do in this direction is to select by experiment a bit that is suited not only to his horse's temperament and sensitiveness, but also to his own hands.*

The requirements in successful breaking are threefold—safety to man and beast, rapidity, and, as far as possible, permanency.

The Necessity for a Complete Course of Breaking

Many horses and ponies appear to have a natural aptitude for the work required of them, and are so well built and balanced that they seem to require no special course of breaking. This is more often true of hunters than of polo ponies. In the hunting-field there is the stimulation of the chase which nearly all horses feel, and there is, further, the instinct of self-preservation. The result of these two operating on a healthy, fit horse that has gone through a superficial training and has

learned to carry a man, to pull up, to submit to guidance by the bit and reins, and to jump, is a mount that will cross a country with a reasonable degree of safety and that may enable the rider to see a hunt through. This is the point at which most young Irish horses have arrived, and many riders are content to hunt them, trusting to time and experience in the hunting-field to turn them into something like the finished article. If such riders are willing to run risks and do not mind the uncertainty and discomfort, they may achieve a modified result, but they will not produce the finished hunter so desired by the connoisseur.

With the polo pony it is not so easy. There is a greater necessity for balance, precision of movement, and instant obedience; and, further, the sudden stopping, starting, turning, and twisting, all at full speed, throw a great strain on tendons and ligaments, and the work is done on harder ground. We often find ponies which have a talent for polo, and which, in the hands of fine horsemen, play a very creditable game without much schooling, but they will be useless in less skilled hands. They will also have a great tendency to become unsound, either through hitting one leg against the other in their misdirected efforts to carry out their rider's indications, or through having an undue strain put on muscles unprepared by correct, progressive exercises. In the latter case some breakdown of tendon or ligament is always imminent.

I will try to make my meaning clear by an analogy. Take the example of a violinist with a great love of music and great artistic perception. He may quickly learn to play with great feeling, and his performance may be very pleasing to the uninitiated, but until he has learned thoroughly the technique of music and of his art he will not be a finished artist, and the connoisseur, although he may recognise the promise underlying the performance, will easily detect the want of training. On the other hand, there is the violinist (with a certain talent but without genius) of great industry and determination, who, under a good teacher and with practice, will acquire such proficiency that he can play any of the great compositions faultlessly. Of him the connoisseur will say: "His playing is correct, but is without feeling." With the horse it is the same. He may possess a great love of hunting, great aptitude for polo, and he may hunt and play with great enthusiasm, but to make him the hunter or pony of our dreams he will have to go through the mill just as our violinist had, and he must learn the technique of his art. Or we may have a polo pony who on account of his perfect shape will learn every exercise it is possible for skill to teach him, but he may just lack that dash, which removes him from the highest class. So we see that what we must try to find is the keen hunter, who, in addition, must be schooled to carry himself correctly and to obey the aids correctly, or the polo pony who has that

generosity that makes him jump into his stride, and stop temperately, over and over again. Such a pony, if he is put through the school, even if he is lacking in extreme speed, can never be a bad player.

The Necessity for a System of Step-by-Step Breaking

At any time during a horse's breaking there may be resistance to the aids; indeed, we may say with truth that during the whole of his working life we can never be sure that he will not put up some defence. It may be necessary, as the only means of overcoming this defence, to go back to some previous lesson—one that the horse can and will perform—and then again to work forward from that to the point where resistance occurred; and, should we have omitted a step, we shall probably find ourselves in the difficulty arising from a gap in the sequence. In the following pages I have laid down a series of steps, each one leading to the next, and of such imperceptible gradations that they can all in turn be understood by the horse.

The Necessity for a Rider to be a Horse-breaker in Some Degree

I have so often met men who frankly say that they are content to hunt or play polo, and who add that they have no wish to be horse-breakers, that I should like to point out that *all* riding must carry with it a certain aptitude for applying the aids in such a way as to overcome the resistance of the horse. This is horse-breaking. Want of knowledge in this direction accounts for most of the failures. I take it that no man buys a hunter that he has not tried and found suitable, or that he has not seen or heard of going well. If after it comes into his possession it deteriorates, surely this is because the horse has opposed his rider's wishes and has found a way of resisting successfully. If, on the contrary, the horse continues to go well under the new ownership, or if he improves, one may take it that his rider has sufficient knowledge of horse-breaking to defeat the defences of his mount.

With a polo pony this is more marked. It is certain that every polo pony contracts faults in the course of a hard season, and unless the rider knows how and is willing to devote the time to correct these faults, the pony simply goes from bad to worse. By correction of faults I mean exact and scientific schooling inside and outside the game, especially the latter. The former, of course, can only be done in an unimportant practice game in which the rider can devote himself chiefly to the correction of his pony. It is no use for the player to say (as I have often heard him say): "I am not a horse-breaker; I want to play

polo." He *must* be a horse-breaker to correct his pony's faults and to teach it to play polo in a way that suits him, for if he does not know how to do this, or if he has not the time or inclination, his pony rapidly deteriorates, and he gets less and less enjoyment from the game, fails to maintain his form and to play up to his handicap in a team.

Many are under the impression that they can leave matters to their grooms—a great fallacy. A groom's idea of horse-breaking and polo pony schooling is to find out what the animal can do with most ease to himself and his rider, and to repeat this *ad nauseam;* or he will confound his master by telling him, in reply to the pointing out of some fault: "He never does it with me, sir." Grooms cannot break horses or school ponies.

Then there is another aspect of the case. The expense of polo has been put forward as one of the greatest drawbacks to the game in this country. What is the biggest expense of polo? Pony failures. What most reduces the cost of polo? Pony successes. What most tends to make a pony a success? Skilful breaking and schooling. Bad riding, hurried* and unskilful schooling will, moreover, have a great tendency to turn a young horse or pony into an unsound one. On the other hand, I must repeat that the great risk of sprains and exostoses is minimised by careful, scientific, and progressive breaking, and to this I must add judicious diet and personally supervised stable management.

As regards tactics and combination in polo, this is almost entirely a matter of well-schooled ponies and good riding. Combination in a team under a good captain, and polo tactics generally, are not difficult to learn in theory, but they are very difficult to carry out in practice, except by a good rider on a well-schooled pony.

As regards the hunter, it is a source of never-ending wonder to me how much fatigue and discomfort people will put up with from imperfectly broken horses.

The Necessity of a Full Understanding of the Horsy Terms Used

If the reader will turn to "Horsy Terms not Generally Understood" (p. 141), he will find full explanations of certain horsy terms. Even though they appear familiar, it would be as well if he referred to this chapter when first he comes across them in the text. It is important that we both mean and understand the same thing.

* When I use the word "hurried" I mean something very far short of the two years advocated by writers of textbooks.

CHAPTER II

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HORSE

The Instinct of Self-Preservation: Seeking Safety in Flight

IT must be accepted as a first principle that horses are fairly defenceless against attack. In their wild state they developed speed as their means of defence, and they used this speed to outdistance their enemies. Therefore the natural instinct of the horse is to gallop away whenever he is attacked, hurt, or threatened. This is "seeking safety in flight," and is the "instinct of self-preservation." From this same instinct all horses get their love of ease and freedom and their resentment at any interference with either. It renders them impatient of control; they welcome cessation from work and hanker after those places associated with peace, quiet, and food. These points must be constantly in the breaker's mind—in fact, it is impossible to overestimate their importance.

I shall be better understood if I make a brief analysis of this instinct of self-preservation. It will be easier to see that it is the only attribute possessed by the horse which is of any use to the rider.

If only slightly alarmed the unbroken horse may turn his hindquarters aggressively towards the object of his fear, ready to use his natural means of offence—his heels—and then, if his alarm is sufficiently increased, he will cease his aggressive tactics and gallop away. Suppose he did not, what chance would one have of controlling him? Suppose when struck or threatened he turned on us instead of flying from us? Were he to pit his strength against ours, the victory would be his. Fortunately a horse that has been handled from his youth by men who appreciate this point has never had the opportunity of realising his strength, and has not enough intelligence even to suspect it, until through some mismanagement on the part of his rider he finds out that he need not obey. The donkey, which, contrary to general belief, is more intelligent than the horse, is nearer to knowing his own power and soon discovers the minimum allegiance he need give to man, but on account of his small stature, thick hide, and less highly strung nerves his resistance is more passive than active. This resistance usually takes the form of stubbornness in the donkey, and in the horse it results in the more active

resistance of bolting, rearing, and various forms of "jadiness" and "nappiness."

The most difficult animal to break is undoubtedly the one that has apparently no love of ease, the one we cannot reward with cessation from work because he has no wish to walk calmly when we relax our legs and ease the reins. We cannot convey to the horse who is "on the go" always that he has done well and that we are satisfied. Such a horse has no incentive to obey. Give me a horse that, *while being a free mover*, nevertheless loves ease, relaxes and walks quietly as soon as he is left alone, and I will break him. If, on the contrary, he is always on his toes, the issue is doubtful until you can bring him to a frame of mind that appreciates cessation from work.

I am afraid that I shall dispel many illusions, but the psychology of the horse must be dealt with in a manner entirely free from sentiment. So many writers on riding and horse-breaking have either ignored the subject or, writing from an erroneous standpoint, have credited the horse with powers of understanding and affection which he does not possess. It appears that some consolation is derived from the supposition that we can treat the horse which is to be ridden and broken and schooled, as a willing co-operator. This he is not. The best we can say is that their instinct of self-preservation prompts them to fear their rider more than the dangers and difficulties which beset them on all sides. Horses gallop away under the threat of whip and spur. How can we explain the keenness of some horses and the lethargy of others? There are many very speedy animals that can live with the fastest, but who never seem to get their noses in front; others, without much urging, seem to have a great talent for winning. In the wild state the former would be the rank and file of the herd, content to be there or thereabouts in case of flight from threatened danger; the latter would be the leaders and the first to reach safety. Then, also, in the wild herd, there would be a third category—horses cunning enough to know whether or not great exertion was necessary; they would often bring up the rear, sometimes they would be in the ruck, but never in front. Racehorses in the first category are the animals that are often placed, but who never finish first; the second category supplies the winners; while the third contains the completely useless, from a racing point of view.

The keenest hunters have a genuine love of the chase, an intense desire to be with hounds, and they often exhibit noticeable satisfaction at a kill. Others will gallop well so long as they are among *some* of their fellows, not necessarily the leaders, but in some part of the field or other; while there are a few that require urging throughout the whole of a run. The last will refuse at the slightest provocation, and are content to leave hounds at the earliest opportunity.

The Gregarious Instinct

There is a phase of this same instinct of self-preservation which comes into the subject of horse-control, but it is a quality of which only limited use can be made; in fact, oftener than not, it causes difficulties and has to be combated. This is the gregarious instinct that prompts animals to herd together for their protection. This causes the tendency which horses have to hang together and follow each other.

Association of Ideas

The horse owes no allegiance to man, and we have simply assumed an ascendancy over him for our convenience and enjoyment, and because our greater intelligence has devised means of controlling him and making him do our bidding.

The method of making our wishes known to the horse is to make him, in his mind, connect disobedience with pain, and obedience with ease and freedom from pain. The horse has no useful mental quality other than this particular instinct, and there is no means of making our wishes known except by this "association of ideas." The skilful and sympathetic breaker will, to some extent, convey to the horse in course of time that safety lies along the lines of obedience, and he will gradually so refine his indications as to inflict less and less pain as his horse's education proceeds.

He stops in full gallop because the pressure of the bit on the bars of the mouth has come from experience to serve as a warning that not to stop is to incur greater discomfort and pain than to stop. It is the same as his pulling up of his own accord to avoid a collision. In both cases, to go on would involve him in something more unpleasant.

One often hears it said that a polo pony has a fondness for the game. This is not true. The only work that a horse is put to in this country from which it derives any enjoyment is hunting. I will not enlarge on the latter point here, as it will be dealt with later; but we must accept the fact that all ponies, even the most brilliant, play polo only under compulsion. They ride off because they have been taught to move sideways from the pressure of the leg to avoid the spur, a dig from which has always followed disobedience to the leg.*

* It may be noted here that there is one interesting exception to the above. There is a great reluctance of the pony to play near the boards. The beginner is better at this than the old hand. The former will sometimes give an exaggerated jump to clear them, but as he becomes more experienced he gets to fear them more and more and it is difficult, sometimes impossible, to get the old hand to gallop freely when the game settles on or

Rather than turn out to play they would remain in the shelters; indeed, there is often difficulty in making them come out. I do not see how they can be expected to like polo. To them it is a very strenuous, meaningless affair, and they do not know the rules of the game and are not capable of reading the score-board. They face a backhander because they are forced on by the rider's legs, and not because they hope to intercept the ball and thereby help on their side. It is a matter of indifference to them which side wins, and if a pony gets cunning enough to know that the player is riding for a backhander, it may often be necessary to deceive him so that he does not begin to stop and turn too soon. It is well to have no illusions on this point, and there is a ready answer to the man who maintains that he owns a pony that is fond of polo. His pony will be unplayable if the curb-chain is left off, if the martingale is too long, or if he has on a bit other than the one to which he is accustomed.

My meaning will be clear to anyone who has seen the effect of the hunting-horn on horses at grass or even in the stables. They will stop feeding and leave their mangers, and if at grass they will gallop, jump, and follow a hunt. It is impossible to imagine a polo pony similarly exhilarated by the sound of the bell or continuing in the game after parting company with his rider. As a matter of fact, a loose pony will usually gallop off to the stable instead of even making for the shelters. In the case of a hack, the fresher he is and the more under-exercised, it will be found that the greater will be the tendency to spin round and make for home.

I once had a well-known Argentine pony that I had played successfully for twelve years, and I can truthfully say that during the whole of that time he had never let me down. One day I lent him to a beginner for a chukker, a weak and inexperienced rider. The old pony would not play a yard for him; he circled outside the game and behaved generally as if he were umpiring. The next chukker that I played him he was his old staunch self again. Now, if this pony had had any liking for polo, he would surely have given the youngster a chance to have *one* hit at the ball. On the contrary, he took advantage of the first opportunity of his life, to shirk his task.

It will be seen, therefore, that we have to make a *slave* of him if he is to be a well-mannered horse. So the rider must take the utmost care never in any circumstances to act in a way inconsistent with this view.

---

about the edge of the ground. For some reason he fears the boards more than he fears the rider. I think it is because his attention is divided. He can cope with the other galloping ponies and keep his eye on the ball at the same time, but the boards are a less accustomed element of danger to which he prefers to give the whole of his attention.

If he does the horse is certain to take advantage of him and acquire to some extent a knowledge of his power, which involves an unnecessary struggle for supremacy. All fights that are not drawn result in victory or defeat. If the horse wins, he gets a further knowledge of his strength, which is exceedingly dangerous and which may never be eradicated. If he is defeated—well, I never like to have dealings with a beaten and embittered adversary. I infinitely prefer to be served by one who accepts my superiority and domination without ever having seriously questioned it, and certainly never having pitted himself against me, even unsuccessfully.

We see, therefore, the great importance of preventing a horse from knowing his own power and of impressing upon him that his instinct to seek safety in flight is the one to rely on for his own comfort and peace of mind. If the breaker does not lose sight of the fact that his object is to make a slave of the horse (and I regret I cannot use a more palatable word), it is clear that all initiative must be the rider's. According to Fillis, the broken horse should have only "reflex actions." "The only brain that he has is that of his rider." While I do not go as far as this, I do maintain that individuality, personality, and initiative in the horse may be very amusing and interesting, but we should be circumspect as to how we cultivate them; indeed, whenever they militate against his usefulness they should be repressed.

By this I do not wish to convey that breaking can proceed without occasional struggles for supremacy; these may occur even in the earliest stages of handling, but if it is in the breaker's mind from the beginning that the point he wishes to arrive at is implicit obedience, these struggles need not be serious and may consist of acts of disobedience and impatience of control rather than of actively aggressive tactics. It must be understood that I assume the animal's conformation is suitable and that he is not resisting through pain.

One, of course, wishes it were different; one wishes that the horse had the same love of approval as the dog, and that we could appeal to this. The only reward we can give is cessation from work; even the caresses, the pats on the neck we give him, he has to be taught to appreciate by associating the idea of a pat with this ease and cessation from work. An appreciation of this will simplify breaking enormously.

It is almost universally believed that a mild and gentle tone of voice has a calming effect on the horse, that there is some magical influence in the word "whoa" spoken in a drawling way,* and that clicking to him has the effect of urging him forward. It would be just as easy to train a horse to move forward at the word "whoa," and to stop

* I think, however, that the word "whoa" spoken gently has a very soothing effect on the rider and helps to prevent him becoming exasperated.

when clicked to. Also, if we accompany a pat on the neck with a kick with the spur, the horse will soon learn to dash forward when he is patted, and if we pull the reins as we click to him he will soon learn to stop at the click.

A friend of mine used to drive a fast-trotting but rather lazy pony in a governess cart. One day he broke his whip, and the only way he could then reach to use the broken stick was from a standing position. After pulling himself up by the reins a few times for this purpose, his pony began to anticipate him and would start off at a great pace whenever the reins were tightened. My friend saw the chance of extracting some amusement from this, and, having first taught the pony to stop when he hissed, he thenceforth deliberately *trained* him to dash off when the reins were pulled. I was his first victim, and the first time I took hold of the pony to stop him was to avoid running into a herd of cows just outside the little market town. The result may be imagined, especially as my friend slipped out of the back of the cart, leaving me to cope with an infuriated drover and to convince the village policeman of my sobriety.

Another man I know, whose hobby was teaching horses to do circus tricks, had so trained a pony that it would refuse to jump when the whip was cracked behind it and in spite of the most furious yells, but as soon as the noise stopped and the trainer's back was turned the pony would jump freely. This training was very simple : the pony was held on the long reins by my friend's soldier-servant while the whip was being cracked, and as soon as it ceased he was quietly driven over the jump and then halted, fed, and made much of.

These are two good examples to show that by the association of ideas we can make our wishes known to the horse, even though the procedure be the reverse of the accepted routine ; and the latter example was used as an object lesson in teaching horsemanship to the children of the N.C.O.s of the unit.

The Habit of Obedience

There is in this connection another question for consideration, and one on which I do not care to dogmatise. To what extent, if any, is association of ideas replaced by a "habit of obedience" in the finished, experienced horse? Some appear so intelligent and obey the rider's indications so promptly that it would seem that they possess only "reflex actions." I doubt, however, whether we need complicate our theories by the introduction of a fresh element, and we may pin our faith to "association of ideas." If, however, a rider prefers to think that "a habit of obedience" is established, it will do no harm, as it

THE RESULT MAY BE IMAGINED.

will not in any way invalidate what I have to say. A habit of obedience is only the final outcome of the form of training I shall lay down, but it is unwise to rely on it.

The Duration of a Course of Breaking

It must not be imagined from the foregoing that, given horses of suitable conformation, the time required to break them will be the same in every case; nor can one lay down rules for the duration of a course of breaking which will suit all horses. On the contrary, although the steps through which they will have to pass do not vary, the duration of a course will be short or long according to whether the horse learns quickly or slowly. However careful we may be to prevent him from realising his strength, he will resist. This resistance will come at one stage or another or at many stages—it is inevitable—and it will be persistent or transitory. It is, moreover, impossible to predict at what point there will be resistance and whether it will be difficult or easy to overcome. This involves no exception to the rule of "self-preservation." If this instinct is highly developed, and if it takes the form of impatience of control, the course of breaking may be protracted. If, on the contrary, it takes the form of love of ease, obedience may come quickly, the horse deciding that it is the lesser of two evils, on the principle of "Anything for a quiet life." The instinct of self-preservation affects the horse's so-called temperament throughout its career; it accounts for boldness no less than sluggishness and for courage, no less than cowardice; in fact, every shade of character is traceable to it.

Punishment

The dictionary definitions of punishment, in so far as they can possibly apply to education, are: "The infliction of a penalty in retribution for an offence; also that which is inflicted as a penalty; a penalty imposed to insure the application of a law." I maintain that of these three the last is the only one that has any useful significance in our dealings with the horse. If there were means at our disposal of explaining to him that the punishment we were inflicting was for some past misdeed, it would be effective, but the intelligence of the horse is not sufficient to connect the two. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to meet opposition with the immediate application of the correct aid, and if we allow that fleeting moment to pass, subsequent punishment will be of no avail. Hayes, in his "Illustrated Horse-Breaking," aptly says: "The employment of ineffectual punishment or of unavailing force serves only to increase the horse's knowledge of his own power,

which we should always strive to withhold from him." But if we apply punishment which the horse is unable to connect with his misdeed, we make him restive and surly, and create confusion in his mind.

There is another aspect of the case, and here again I quote Hayes. "We should bear in mind that humanity as well as self-interest enacts that the breaker is justified in inflicting suffering on the horse only as a means of education . . . but not as a penalty for wrongdoing, which is a question of morality which does not concern him." For example, a horse shies at some object by the roadside and swings his quarters away from it (as he will if he is allowed to complete the movement). If we then spur him or beat him there will be no other effect than a feeling on his part of injustice, to which he will give expression by active resentment; but if we can meet with the spur the movement of his quarters to one side and drive them back into the straight, there will be something educative in it. If, however, as mentioned before, we allow that fleeting moment to escape, punishment will be worse than useless. It is then better to do nothing, but to wait for another opportunity.

Reward

This brings us to the question of reward, the antithesis of punishment. The only reward that we can give a horse is ease, cessation from work, accompanied by a pat on the shoulder. This reward is just as important as punishment. Hayes does not agree. He says: "Punishment is far more effective than reward, which I regretfully feel compelled to say may be altogether laid aside, without any appreciable interference with a horse's instruction. I make this statement from practical experience and not from sentimental considerations, with which I have at present no concern." I disagree with this, and I suggest to the breaker that he alternate insistence on implicit obedience and reward with the greatest conscientiousness; in fact, the course of a lesson can be well divided as follows: fifty per cent. of the time in rigorous, correctly executed movements, and fifty per cent. of ease following such obedience.

The Dog and the Horse Compared

"Every organism is born with a number of tendencies to behave in a specific way in certain circumstances. Some habits are in direct contrast to instinct. To create habits so strong as to overcome some of the undesirable instinctive tendencies is the purpose of training" ("The Real Secret of Training Dogs," by Anne Fox).

This might be the method to adopt to break a horse if it had the intelligence of a dog and if we wished to give him the same kind of education. But we do not wish to make use of a horse in the same way as a dog, and his kind of intelligence is entirely different. The object of breaking is therefore not to *overcome* the horse's predominant instinct, which is to seek safety in flight, but rather to divert it into a groove of usefulness. As a means to this end we use the other branches of the instinct of self-preservation. These take the form of appreciating cessation from work, a love of ease and freedom, and the desire for food. The only "undesirable instinctive tendencies" we have to overcome are, firstly, the one arising from the desire to reach those places associated with ease, food, and cessation from work, and, secondly, the gregarious instinct. I mention this difference in the training of these two types of animals as confusion sometimes exists.

There is nothing in a horse's mental equipment to which we can appeal in order to teach him to obey, other than the "instinct of self-preservation," and no other medium through which we can make this appeal than "association of ideas." One wishes it were not so, as it would be much pleasanter and would produce a feeling of being more humane if we could appeal to a horse's affection for us or to a love of approval, and persuade ourselves that he does not mind his schooling and that he is enjoying his work.

CHAPTER III

THE HANDLING OF THE YOUNG HORSE

BEYOND being fitted with a head-collar, which can be done when it is a few months old, the less handling a foal gets the better. The mare will have been taken into the stables several times during the first year to have her feet trimmed, and perhaps for shelter during rough weather, and the foal will have followed her, so by the time it is

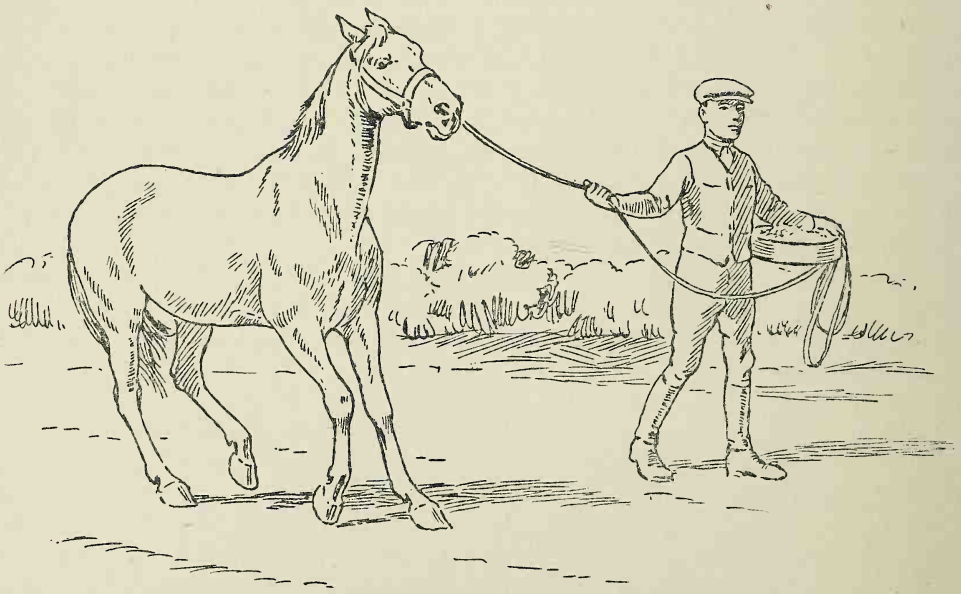


FIG. 1.

The lunge-rein should be hooked on and held coiled in the left hand, while the right hand holds it about a yard from the nose-band.

one year old it will be more or less used to a loose box. After the foal is weaned and eating grass, opportunity can be taken to induce it to feed out of a salver and to follow the groom. By imperceptible degrees the groom can accustom it to be touched all over and gradually to be led about the paddock. It is wrong to attempt to lead it holding on to the head-collar; the lunge-rein should be hooked on and held coiled in the

left hand, while the right hand holds it about a yard from the nose-band (Fig. 1). Then if the youngster should start back or try to draw away there can be a certain amount of play, and it is not necessary to pull him up short, which might have the effect of making him struggle and perhaps throw himself down, or he might break loose and thus gain the first knowledge of his power. The lunge-rein can be paid out and the horse gradually checked and then drawn forward again to the salver of oats, without which the breaker should never approach his pupil at this early stage.* There is usually no difficulty until he becomes three and a half years old and serious handling begins. Then for the first time the realisation must come that restraint is meant and that his days of freedom are over.

A word of warning is necessary here. It is a mistake to make pets of our youngsters, although I know the temptation is great. Young horses are beautiful and fascinating creatures. One is greatly attracted by the look in their eyes, at once inquisitive and shy, and it is so easy to obtain some response to hand-feeding and petting. But the transition from this friendliness to the rigours of serious breaking is too great; he will come to expect from us caresses and titbits, he will follow us about expecting them; then comes the day when we have to make him fly before us and to teach him that he can never please himself or act on his own initiative. If we treat him like a companionable dog for the first three and a half years of his life, and thenceforward as a slave, if we have to set him difficult tasks and to exact implicit obedience, thus changing his life of ease into one of irksome toil—all this, besides being unfair, is unpractical. It is increasing the breaker's difficulties and making the lot of the horse harder.

It is wise, therefore, from the earliest handling, to pat the horse on the shoulder and give him a nibble of oats only in return for some act of obedience, however small, such as allowing a foot to be picked up or allowing himself to be led in a circle; but to caress him and to reward him indiscriminately, and for no other reason than that one feels well disposed, is meaningless and may give a wrong impression. The need for this injunction will become clearer as the breaking proceeds.

The first sign of trouble will usually be when the surcingle is buckled on, but if this is done very gradually there need be none of the battles and struggles which so often accompany the first girthing. Roughly and hastily done, it may cause the young horse to throw himself down and to struggle with the greatest violence, and with the risk of injury. If the surcingle is first laid across his back, then quietly passed under

* This is the time to teach the young horse by progressive steps to tolerate being tied up in a loose box.

his belly and buckled loosely, I have never found that the three-year-old will resent it at all. It should then be tightened hole by hole. When he will endure reasonable tight girthing he can be led about with it on.

The next step will be the substitution of the long-rein saddle for the surcingle, and he will be ready for the preliminary course of long reins.

A FRESH HORSE ON A TARRED ROAD.

CHAPTER IV

LONG-REIN DRIVING

THERE are many objects attained by driving a horse in a circle, with the breaker standing in the centre, guiding and controlling him by means of a pair of long reins. In this position he is nearer to being master of the situation than when borne along on the horse's back. Being more or less anchored to the ground, the breaker can exert a more marked pressure on the bit than he would as a rider, and he is thus able to induce a feeling of powerlessness, which has a wonderful moral effect on the horse.

Long-rein driving has the following uses :

1. A horse can be quickly made to believe that it is absolutely necessary to move forward when asked to do so, and to stop when pressure is put on his mouth. This is the beginning of horse-control, and the learning of these two lessons must precede all other teaching.
2. The preliminary mouthing is best carried out by means of this useful method, and the horse cannot carry his head incorrectly.
3. The rudiments of the aids are more quickly learned in the long-rein tackle.
4. Owing to the advantageous position of the breaker and the feeling of helplessness mentioned above, a fresh and refractory horse is more quickly and effectively subdued by this than by any other means.
5. The breaker is in a much safer position than on the horse's back, where he is, to a large extent, at the horse's mercy—*e.g.*, a fresh horse on a tarred road.
6. The horse, having no weight on his back, is far less likely to injure tendons, ligaments, bones, or joints, if he is immature, in soft condition or over fresh.
7. As a time-saving method of exercising hunters and polo ponies it has no equal. A horse is more effectively exercised by an hour in the long reins than by two and a half hours trailing along a road, and, moreover, there is nothing educative about the latter, unless the groom is exceptionally energetic and expert, whereas in the long-rein tackle his mouth, carriage, wind, and muscle are all benefiting, and his legs are not suffering to the extent they would if carrying a weight.

It is, however, a method that must be carefully studied and scientifically practised, or much harm may be done. I have seen it carried out in a way that would make the angels weep. A horse is very quickly and irretrievably ruined by incorrect long reining, but it has a quality in common with many other things of this life—it involves no greater trouble, time, or exertion to carry it out correctly than incorrectly ; but there is no royal road to learning how to do it, and, like every other

art, all the details must be mastered and then carefully practised till proficiency is acquired.*

The subject has been dealt with in "Illustrated Horse-Breaking" (H. M. Hayes), but I have found it necessary to modify considerably the system laid down in his book.

The saddle invented by Hayes for long-rein driving serves its purpose well. I have, however, found that the overcheck bearing-rein he recommends is unsuitable for breaking the saddle horse. From the first day the horse is bitted we must have constantly before us the correct carriage of the head and neck, and the only contrivance I know of that will produce it is a bearing-rein modelled on the old-fashioned harness bearing-rein. Not only does this insure the horse carrying his head correctly, but if it is accurately adjusted the horse can obtain ease for himself as soon as he adopts the correct carriage of head and neck (Fig. 7). This is in accordance with the principles of horse-breaking: in order to obtain ease a horse has to perform some act correctly, and, having performed it, he obtains ease.

It is not possible to adjust the length of the bearing-rein while the horse is stationary; what seems tight when he is standing still becomes slack when he begins to move. The only way to obtain the correct adjustment is to keep stopping him and to take up the bearing-rein hole by hole until it is tight enough, but not too tight to check forward movement or to prevent a horse obtaining ease when he adopts a good carriage.

It is important that the bearing-rein should be unhooked immediately the horse is stopped for a rest.

It is well to begin with a straight bar bit with keys hanging to it (Fig. 6), and then pass on to one of the snaffles, finding out by trial which of them the horse takes to most kindly. The bearing-rein should fasten on to the rings of the bit by means of spring hooks, which are easily and quickly detached. The driving-reins should be of light web and be twenty-two feet long, and should also have spring hooks for fastening to the bit.

It will be of great assistance if the long-rein driving is carried out in an enclosure a few yards greater in diameter than the circle made by the horse at the full extent of the reins. If the horse is circled in the middle of a field he is apt to try to get away from the centre, and sometimes his efforts are so determined that the breaker will be dragged

* Col. Geoffrey Brooke ("Horse Sense and Horse Mastership") recommends that it is best to practise on an old and experienced horse before attempting to "long rein" a green one. This is a good idea providing such an animal is available. In a battery or cavalry regiment there will be plenty and possibly a few in the transport of a battalion, but the civilian may find a difficulty. But if a man begins with the reins fastened to the nose-band and has the horse inside a suitable enclosure, then, providing he masters the principles and details, he need not go far wrong.

off his feet. It will be necessary for him to hang on to the reins, and such violent pulling must hurt and bruise the bars of the mouth and thus retard the breaking. This is obviated by long reining inside an enclosure, school, or *manège*. It is a good plan to make a ring of sheep hurdles. Inside this the horse realises that there is nothing for it but to go round and round, and, being surrounded by this barrier, he thinks he cannot get away, and so does not attempt it. A course of long reins is greatly simplified by this.

The breaker should stand in the middle, and the horse should circle round him (Fig. 2). The breaking-bit should be in the horse's mouth, and to begin with one rein only should be hooked to the nose-band. There may be difficulty at first in making the horse move forward, in which case an assistant can lead him on a few paces. If the horse still shows reluctance to go forward, the bearing-rein should be unhooked. When the horse circles freely one way round, the exercise must be repeated to the other hand.

In order to stop the horse, it may be necessary at first to drop the whip and to shorten the rein gradually until he is drawn into the centre. While this is being done the breaker should call "Whoa!" repeatedly, so that the horse may come to associate this word with stopping. Soon he will learn to stop when the point of the whip is lowered and "Whoa" is called.

In lunging to the left the rein should be held in the left hand and the lunging-whip in the right, and on the other circle the rein in the right hand and the whip in the left.

When the breaker wishes the horse to increase his pace he should mildly threaten him with the whip (Fig. 5) and click to him at the same time. With a placid or sluggish horse it may be necessary to use the whip freely, and the place to apply it is across the hocks. He will thus associate the click with increased pace, and will learn to jump forward without the threat or use of the whip, but merely on hearing the click. The great point at first is to get the horse to move forward freely, and when free movement has been obtained the bearing-rein can be hooked on and tightened, but gradually, hole by hole, as the horse gets used to it, so as not to impede movement.

The next stage will be to hook both reins on to the bit, but we must continue to lunge the horse on the inner rein only; the outer rein should be left quite slack and should extend round the horse's quarters from the bit to the driver's hand. The horse having been practised in moving forward with the lunge-rein fastened to the bit and if we are careful to leave the outer rein sufficiently slack, there will be no difficulty in getting him to go with two reins. Then we must gradually tighten the outer rein until we have an even feeling on both sides of the bit,

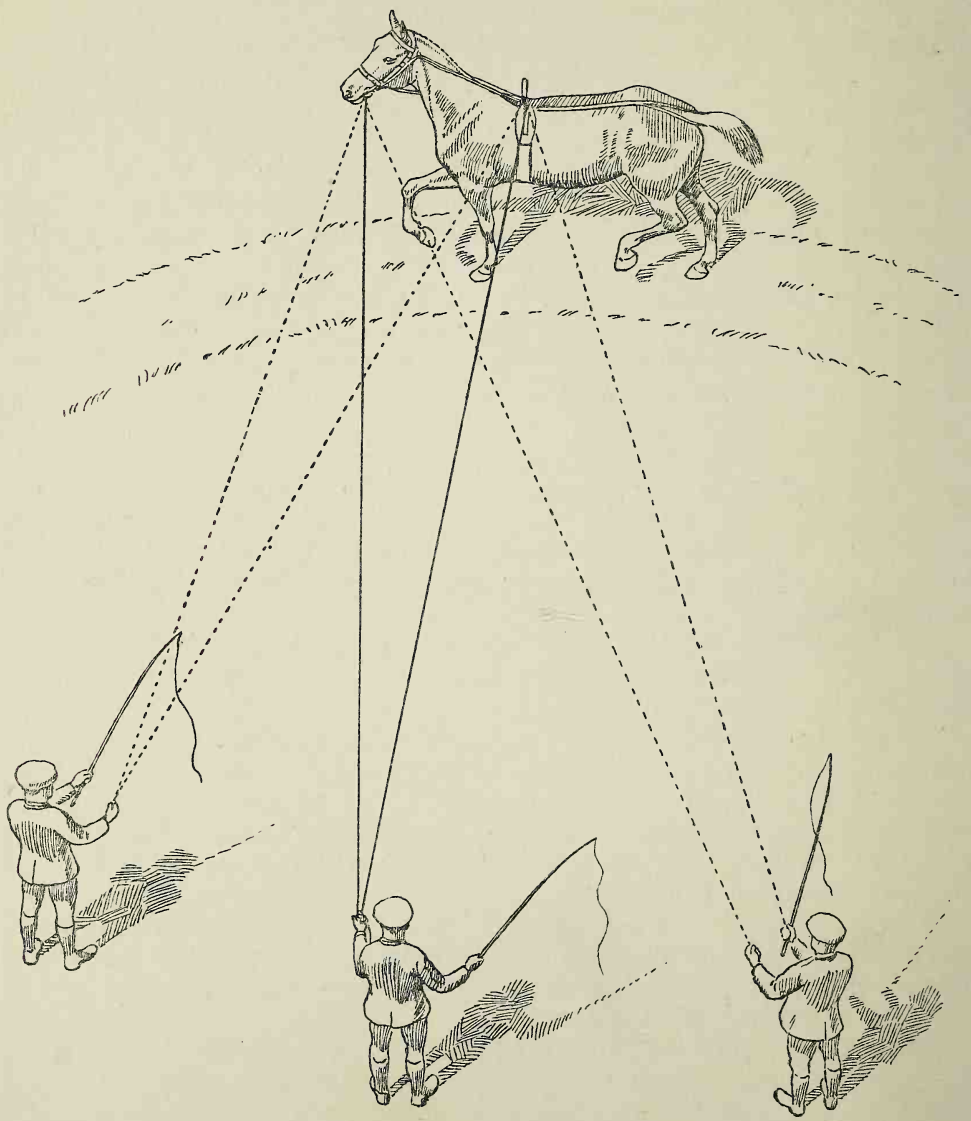


FIG. 2.

The centre figure is correct. The one on the left is wrong; the breaker has the reins and whip in the wrong hands, and is standing too much in front of his horse. This will necessitate his stepping backwards in a circle. In the figure on the right, the breaker has a rein in each hand, which is wrong. He is standing too much behind his horse, which will necessitate his stepping forwards in a circle. This may be necessary at first with some horses.

and until the horse is moving with his hind feet in the same circle as his fore feet.

For the early lessons it is useful to have an assistant always present, especially before the breaker has become expert himself. He is apt, in turning a horse, to overdo the pull on the outer rein, turn the horse completely round, and entangle the reins round the hoops of the saddle. If this happens there is nothing for it but to induce the horse to stand still until the assistant can get to his head, turn him round the reverse way, disentangle the reins, and then set him going again on the circle. But this should only be necessary when both horse and breaker are beginners.

When the correct adjustment between the two reins has been made, *the reins must be held in one hand* (Fig. 3) (the left for the left circle and the right for the right circle). It is not possible to keep an even feeling

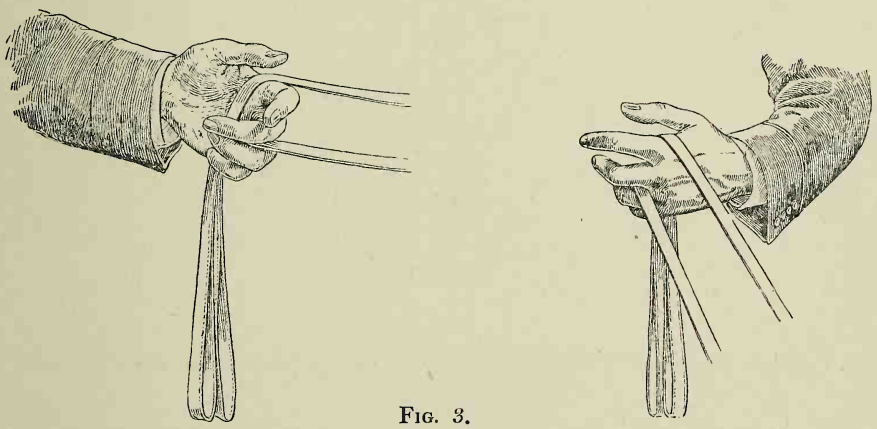


FIG. 3.

The hand holding the reins correctly for long-rein driving. The first two fingers separate the reins, which are held by the little finger.

on the reins, or the correct adjustment, with a rein in each hand; and further, to attempt to use the whip held in the same hand as a rein must cause a jerk which is communicated to the horse's mouth. By the time the horse is moving freely with the two reins in use the correct adjustment of the bearing-rein should have been obtained.

The breaker must, as soon as both reins come into play, exercise the greatest care to keep the track of the hind legs in that of the fore legs, for if they are carried outside the track of the fore legs the horse will be behind his bit, while if they describe a circle smaller than the circle of the fore legs, if it does not cause the horse to stop he will be on the bit and pulling (Fig. 4).

Too much must not be attempted at first. When the horse has

been circling for some time to one hand (let us say to the right), he should be quietly stopped by an even pull on both reins, accompanied by the word "Whoa" and the lowering of the point of the whip. The breaker should then take the whip in the right hand as well as the reins, take hold of the outer rein with his left hand about a yard down, at the

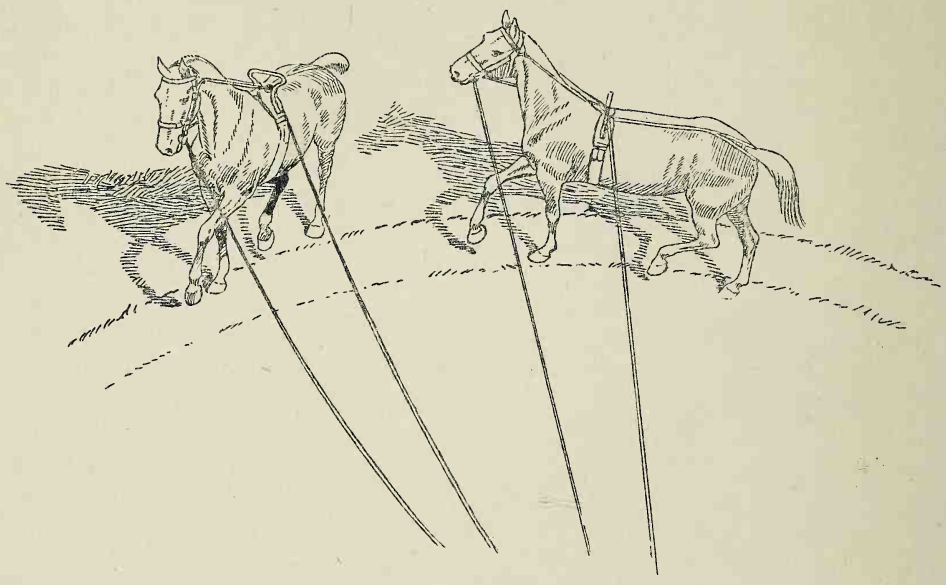


FIG. 4.

In the right-hand figure the horse's hindquarters are outside the track, in the left-hand figure inside; both are wrong.

same time letting the inner rein slip through his right hand for about a yard. This has the effect of turning the horse outwards—*i.e.*, to the left about—the outer rein pulling on the mouth round the quarter. Both reins should then be taken in the left hand (with the whip in the right), and should again be adjusted till the horse is once more "tracking true." For the turn to the other hand these movements, etc., must, of course, be reversed.

Later, when the horse has become docile, willing, and proficient, the turns can be made without stopping longer than is necessary to complete the turn, first at the walk, then at the trot, and then at the canter.

When thus turning him on the move it is best to take a pace towards him to avoid jerking his mouth as he springs forward, which he should do without a pause, in the new direction. In long-reining big horses these turns on the move are unnecessary exercises, but the training of the polo pony is greatly facilitated by teaching him to jump round at the canter.

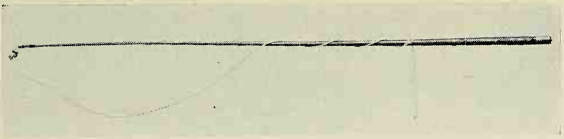


FIG. 5.
Lunging whip, stick 60 ins. long.

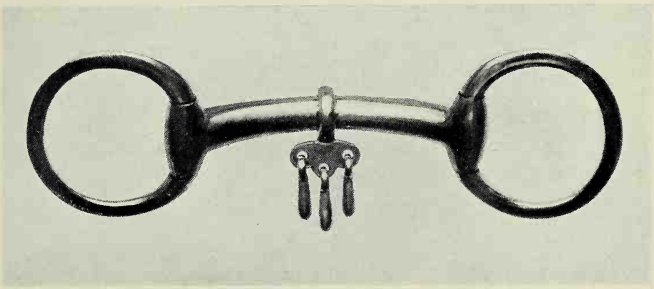


FIG. 6.
A recently designed breaking bit, suitable for a very young horse. For a light mouth it is preferable to Fig. 14, and a further improvement might be to cover it with vulcanite.

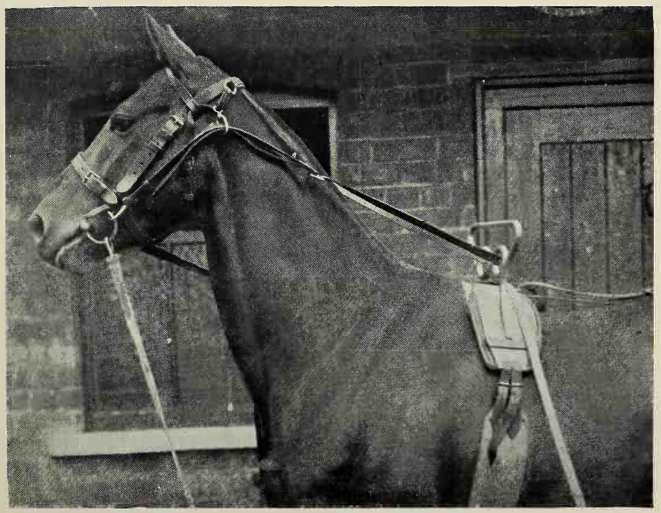


FIG. 7.
Detail of the long-rein driving tackle, showing the bearing-rein holding the horse's head and neck correctly.

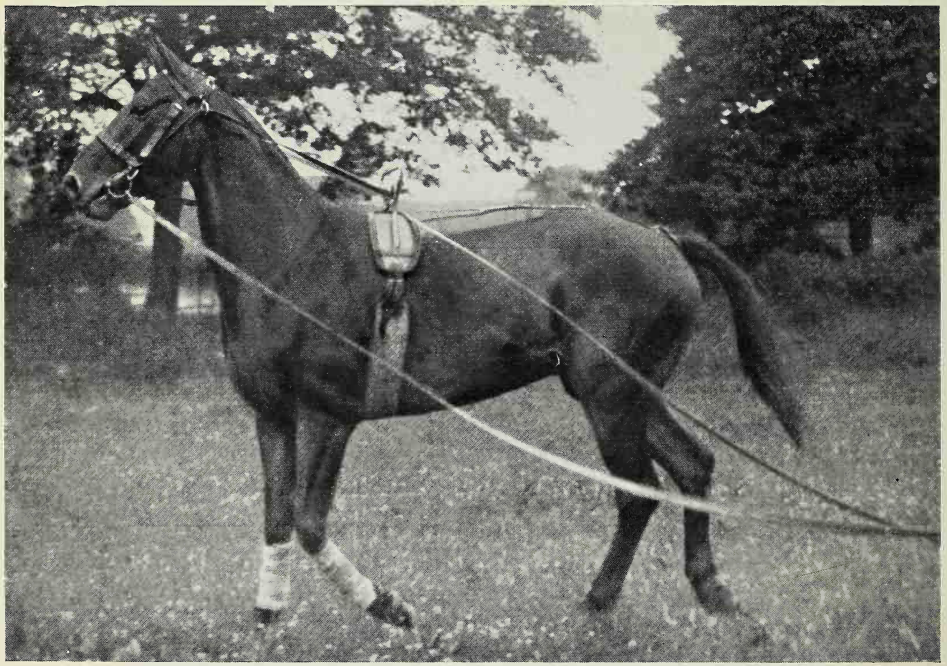


FIG. 8.

The horse cantering in a circle in the long reins. The breaking tackle correctly adjusted.

We should not consider the horse proficient in the long reins until he will do all the above exercises with the outer rein on the saddle kept in place by the iron hoop (but round the hoop and not through the eyes), and the course is not finished until he will walk, trot, and canter at the breaker's bidding.

At the canter (Fig. 8) the horse must always lead correctly—*i.e.*, with the inner legs. If in the course of circling he changes either in front or behind, or both, the breaker may take it for granted that he has unintentionally given some indication. The point in the circle where the horse requires carefully watching to see that he does not change his legs is the point nearest to his stable or to the gate through which he enters and leaves the enclosure.

The horse should only be driven in a circle from the side, never in front of the breaker, because in the latter case the horse can only lighten the pull on the long reins by getting behind the bit, which we must always be at great pains to avoid. Further, if a horse moves forward freely, he will come into the bit with more or less of a jerk, and anyway, even at a walk, a man cannot move as quickly as a horse without greater exertion than he will relish. If the breaker wishes to take a horse along the road in the long reins, he should only do so when the horse is no longer fresh, and he should walk alongside him with the reins so adjusted that there is an even feel on the mouth, the outer rein round the quarter or saddle hoop, and the inner rein straight to the hand (Fig. 9).

As regards teaching the horse to obey the remaining aid—viz., the leg—I will not go into this in detail here, as a full description will appear later. Suffice it to say that the preliminary training for this, which should always begin with the breaker on foot, can, in the case of a free-moving, impetuous horse, be advantageously carried out when he is in the bearing-rein.

We now see that the stages through which a horse should pass in the long reins are :

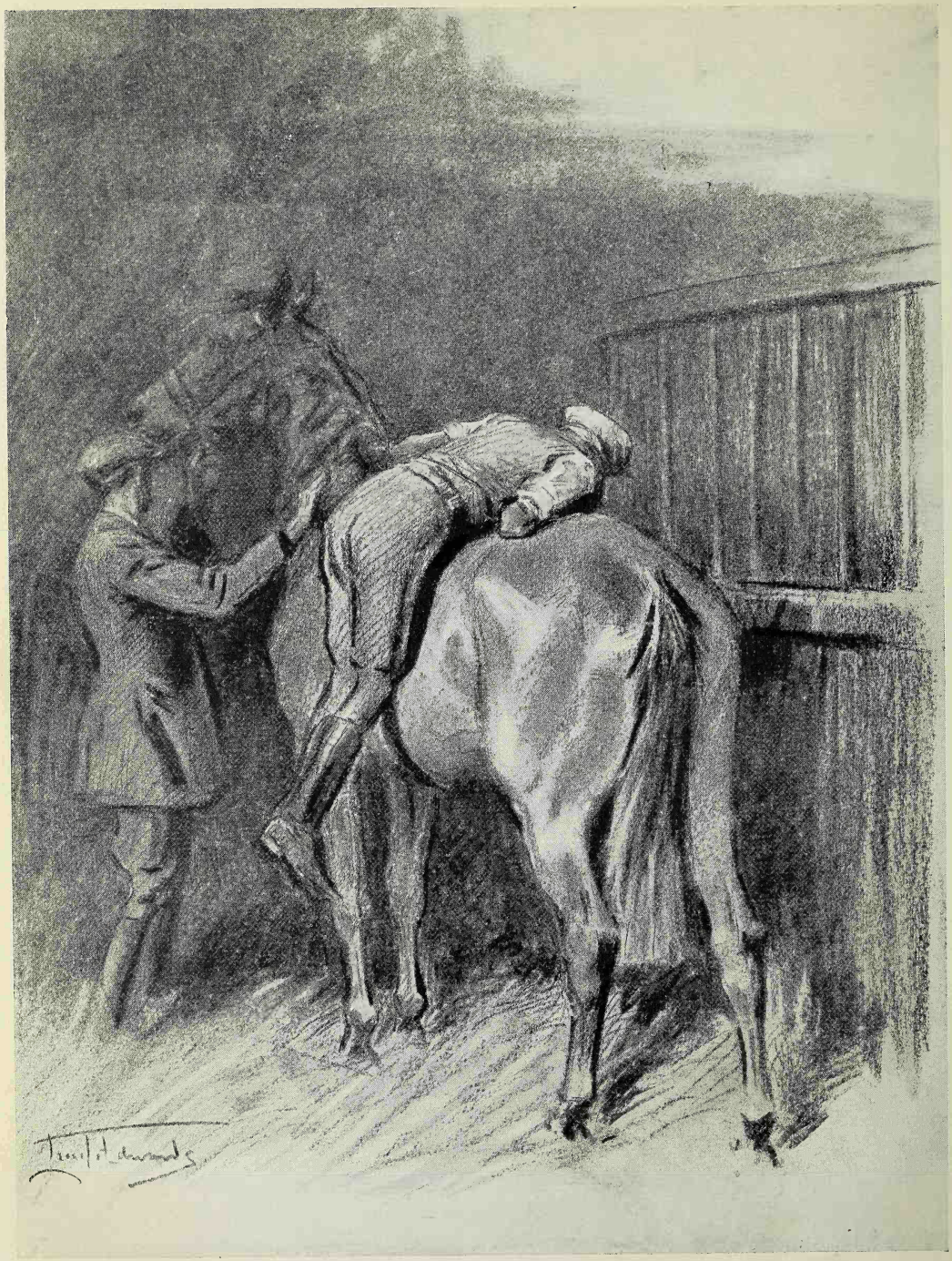
1. Lunging to either hand with one rein fastened to the nose-band, with a breaking-bit in the horse's mouth. (This is to teach free forward movement.)
2. Lunging to either hand with both reins fastened to the bit, the outer rein loose and round the quarter. (This is to accustom him to both reins.)
3. Gradual tightening of the outer rein until there is an even feel of both reins. (This is to teach him to track true, to slow up, and to stop.)
4. Turning about to either hand at the walk, trot, and canter, with the necessary changes of legs, the outer rein round the quarter.
5. Circling and turning about to either hand at the walk, trot, and canter, with the necessary change of legs, the outer rein round the saddle hoops.
6. At some period during the above the bearing-rein must be adjusted.
7. At some period during the above a suitable snaffle must be selected and substituted for the breaking-bit.
8. At some period during the above the horse must be saddled and mounted.

When deciding on the duration of a course of long-rein driving, the breaker must not lose sight of the fact that its objects are twofold—firstly, to teach a horse obedience; secondly, to set him up, give him muscle, improve his action and his wind, and get him strong and active enough for mounted work. The first object is quickly attained, but because we can get the horse moving freely, calmly, and obediently

Fig. 9.

If the breaker wishes to take a horse along the road in the long reins, he should only do so when the horse is no longer fresh, and he should walk alongside him with the reins so adjusted that there is an even feel on the mouth, the outer rein round the quarter or saddle hoop, and the inner rein straight to the hand.

round the circle at all paces up to the canter, we must not think that we have finished. It may seem monotonous to go on doing the same thing day after day when the horse can do it with such ease, but the breaker will find such improvement in all the items mentioned as the secondary objects of long reining that he will be well advised to continue for two or three weeks at the very least.



PREPARATIONS IN THE LOOSE-BOX.

CHAPTER V

MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING

I ONCE asked a well-known Irish dealer, a man who disposes of hundreds of horses of all sorts in the course of a year, which he thought the quickest method of backing a young horse for the first time. He replied without any hesitation: "Send a groom a ten-mile journey with him, and you're safe to bet he'll ride the horse the last eight at least." This may be effective, but it is too rough and ready a method, and, moreover, I have a vivid recollection of a mare, rising four, being delivered to my stable in this manner. She had to come eight miles; I offered to send for her, but the vendor's groom insisted upon bringing her. I assumed she would be led over, as she had never been backed, but the man rode into my yard quite pleased with himself, with the mare's neck well arched and her nose nearly touching her chest. Although she eventually turned out a pony of the highest class, I never got the direct flexion to my liking, and I blame that eight-mile ride in unskilled hands before the pony was mouthed. So let us consider safer and more scientific methods.

If a horse has been handled as a yearling and as a two- and three-year-old, and thoroughly accustomed to the approach of man, there should be no particular difficulty or danger in mounting him for the first time in the open. His stable attendant should before this have taken opportunities of preliminary preparation in the loose box, bending and raising himself as if in the act of springing, and when the horse stands all this calmly he can vault a few times to a position prone across his back, and then proceed by progressive stages till he sits astride and erect. The horse is more likely to stand this quietly if he has a rug on.

The breaker himself should begin while he is going through the course of long-rein driving. By about the third or fourth day it should be possible to get him moving freely on both circles; then, when he is tired, the breaker should remove the breaking saddle and substitute the ordinary riding saddle. This should be done whilst still in the breaking enclosure amid familiar surroundings, so that the horse's attention will not be distracted. It is as well to note here that time should be given for the saddle to warm to the horse's back, not only in these early lessons, but always; the rider's weight coming down on a

cold saddle has a tendency to make a horse buck, which it is important to avoid at all times, especially while in the act of mounting.

The way to tighten the girths, whether the horse is unbroken or broken, is as follows: A girth-strap should be held in each hand; the left hand should pull downwards, and the right hand should pull upwards till it is tightened one hole (Fig. 10). Then the right hand should pull downwards and the left hand upwards for one hole, and so on until the girth is sufficiently tight. This must be done without any jerk, and if the skin becomes wrinkled it must always be smoothed out. We often see horses lay back their ears, turn round and snap at the groom, and even cow-kick at him while being girthed. This is entirely due to rough girthing.

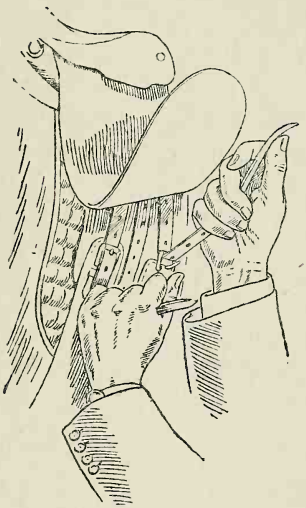
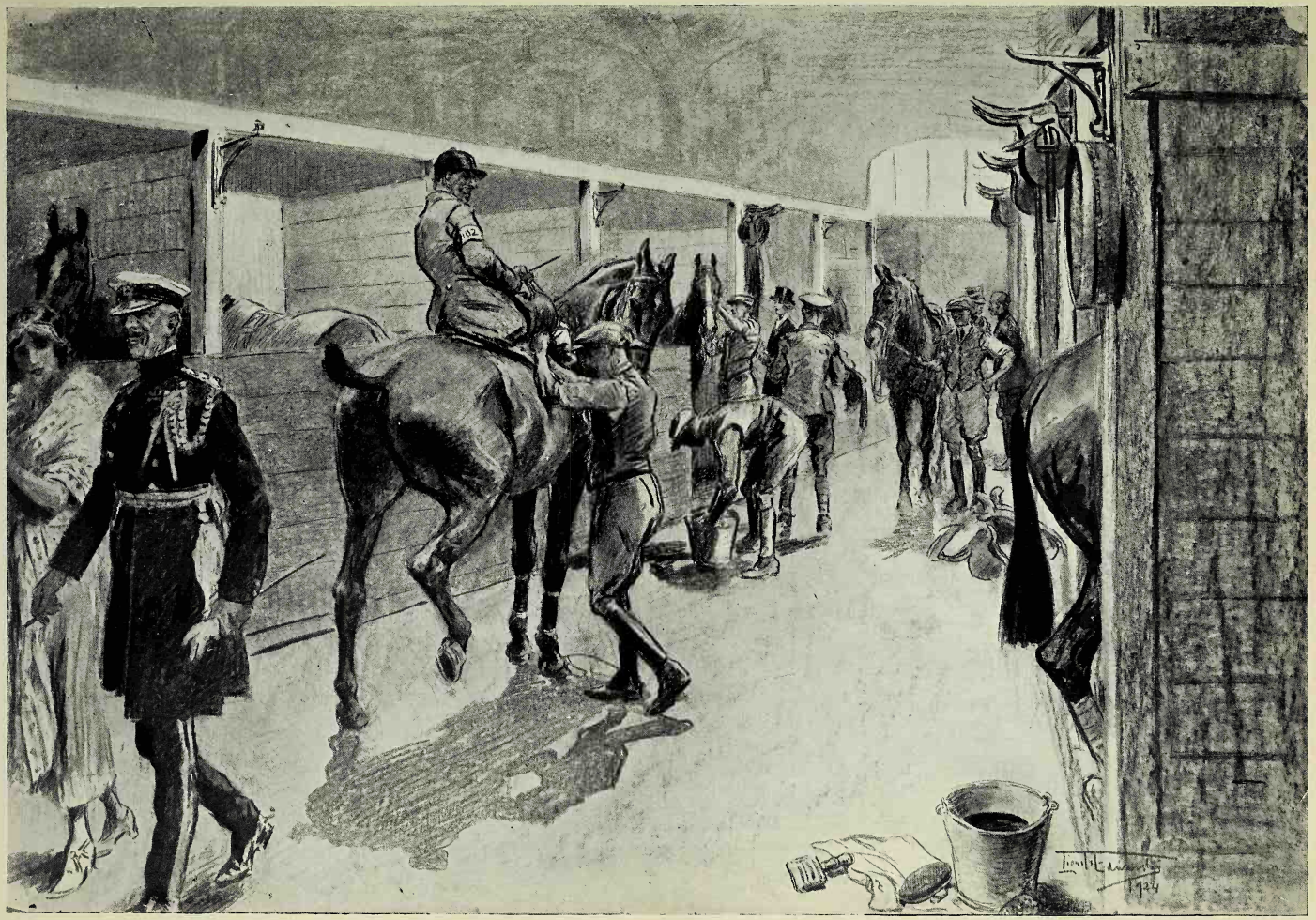


FIG. 10.

The correct way to tighten the girth.

During the early lessons a young horse might be driven round the enclosure a few times with the riding saddle on; with a broken horse it is best to have him saddled up a quarter of an hour before he is ridden. The next step should be, while an assistant holds the horse's head, to lean against him, touch him and pat him all over, take hold of the near stirrup, and put weight on it. His expression should be watched, and if he appears to bear all this calmly the breaker can raise his left foot quietly, and by imperceptible stages first place it in the stirrup, then gradually put weight on it, and very slowly raise himself up, throw his right leg over, and sit down in the saddle. To place the right foot in the stirrup, the leather should be taken in the right hand and the iron swung on to the foot. If the rider gropes for the stirrup with his foot, the horse may mistake this for a leg indication and become restless. Once successfully there, both the assistant and the rider should pat the horse on the shoulder and make much of him; the latter should then dismount, slacken the girths, again make much of him, and without further delay lead him back to the stable. It will not be necessary to warn the breaker that he must be at great pains to avoid touching the horse's quarters as he throws his right leg over.

In this new accomplishment, just as in all other stages of breaking, it is well to be content with little at first. If we can mount and dismount once without startling or upsetting a horse in any way, and thus demonstrate to him that he has nothing to fear and that he has done well, we have gained a point. At the end of the next lesson



CARELESS GIRTHING.

it will be a simple matter to mount and dismount two or three times, each time increasing the movements we make on his back. Soon the horse will learn to bear the rider's weight with equanimity and will take no notice of his movements. As a next step the horse can be led round the breaking-ring, carrying the rider at the walk, then in the long reins at the trot and canter. The bearing-rein can be left on so that the breaker can take hold of it to pull up the horse's head, in case he tries to lower it to buck or kick, and the rider can steady himself by a hold on the breastplate or mane should the horse make unexpected movements. It is not easy to sit a horse when he plays up and has not learned to obey either leg or the reins.

Following the above methods, by the time the course of long reins is finished the horse will have been taught to carry a man, and thereby much time will have been saved. It is then a short process to teach our pupil to move straight forward away from the driving enclosure and turn right or left.

I do not propose to give any instruction on the correct way to

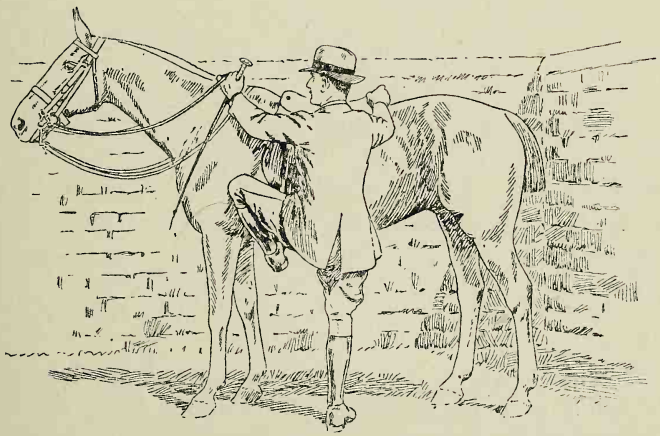


FIG. 11.

The correct position for mounting.

mount. As with holding the reins there are so many ways of doing it that I prefer to leave the reader to stick to the one he is used to and which gives him confidence. I would like, however, to emphasise a few points. Only the snaffle-reins should be held, not the curb reins; the left hand should also hold the whip or polo stick, or both, the latter close to the head with the handle pointed to the ground. Care

must be taken that the toe of the left foot touches the girth and not the horse's belly, and the *inside* of the left knee should rest against the horse's shoulder to enable the rider to stand very close to him (Fig. 11).

While the horse is "green" it is a good plan to place him with his offside against a wall, and as a retrograde movement is harder to cope

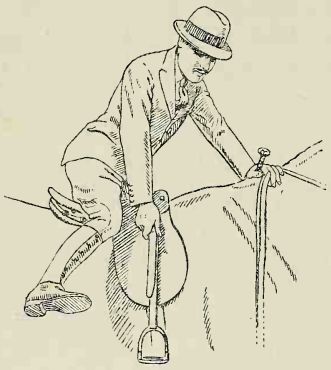


Fig. 12.

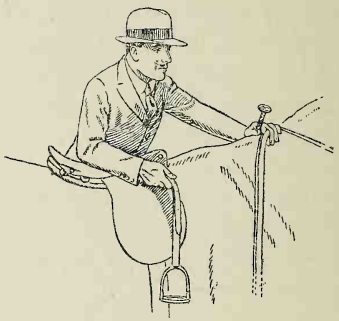


Fig. 13.

Preparing to dismount.

with than a start forward, we shall find it helpful if we can put him with his tail in a corner. We can, by a pull with the snaffle-rein which is in the left hand, check a forward movement; the wall prevents him stepping to the right or backwards, and we can prevent him moving to the left by pushing him with the right hand. If we have an assistant, he should stand at the offside to prevent a movement in that direction, and should hold the horse by the nose-band or the standing martingale, not by the reins.

As for dismounting, I do not recommend vaulting off or sliding off, as the rider is in a disadvantageous position from the time he quits his stirrups till the time he is on the ground and clear of the horse, while I utterly condemn the method of throwing the right leg over the horse's neck. Figs. 12 and 13 show a method of dismounting I was taught in my youth, and which I have always practised.

Bad breaking and careless mounting make a horse restless, which is not only a great nuisance, but can be dangerous. I have seen horses trained without much difficulty to stretch their legs out and hollow their backs. The most notable instance of this I ever saw was a lady who rode astride and simply had to approach her horse and say "Get your back down" for the horse to obey instantly, and her sixteen-hands hunter became as easy to mount as a 14·3 pony.

From the very earliest day a horse should not be allowed to move until the rider is comfortably settled in the saddle. Later he should be taught to place himself so that the rider can mount comfortably from a gate, stump, or bank.

A horse is more likely to stand quietly to be dismounted, however restless he may be to mount, the reason being that he associates dismounting with cessation from work and mounting with the commencement of work. Furthermore, he has probably so often had the rider's toe dug into his side during the process of mounting that he has come to anticipate it, showing his objection by laying back his ears, swishing his tail, and restlessly shifting his hindquarters, usually away from the rider's toe.

CHAPTER VI

BITS AND BITTING

I HAVE only one theory about bitting, and that is that it is a subject upon which it is impossible to theorise. It is easy to decide when we ride a horse that a bit apparently does not suit him, but no amount of experience can tell us definitely without experiment in what other bit he will go kindly and yet be controllable. Out hunting one usually sees snaffles (plain or twisted) with different kinds of cheeks, also the double bit (curb and snaffle), these also with an infinite variety of cheeks to the curb-bit, and great variation in the height of the port. The correct bitting of a hunter is not difficult. Any bit that insures the direct flexion, and that allows us to stop and steady the horse will serve, provided, of course, that it is also mild enough not to impede him in his gallop or to make him afraid to jump freely. If we can compass all this in a snaffle and ring martingale, so much the better; we shall have fewer falls, and the tendency to a refusal is minimised. It should be possible to get almost any hunter to go kindly in this bit, and with adequate control, *provided he has been systematically broken.*

It has become fashionable, if hunters are ridden in a snaffle, to use a single rein and ring martingale, but a snaffle should always be used with a double rein, firstly because one rein may get broken or a mischievous horse may gnaw through it, and secondly because the ring martingale can be used on one rein while the other is left free. Thus we should have one pair of reins to raise the head, and the martingale on the other pair to prevent star-gazing, and also to avoid the danger of the reins being thrown over a horse's head.

Although we should preserve an open mind in the choice of a bit, I will say this much: for long-rein driving the straight bar snaffle with keys, as in Fig. 14, answers best. While still in the long reins this should be followed by a plain snaffle with an "egg-butt" joint to the cheek. Then when we begin mounted work this should be followed by the double bridle (curb and snaffle). It may be necessary to change a bit in order to teach a horse one particular exercise, but we should go back to the double bridle afterwards and stick to it as far as possible during breaking. When the pupil starts hunting and playing polo it will be necessary to find out by trial the bit most suited to the sensibility of his mouth and to his temperament. It will generally be

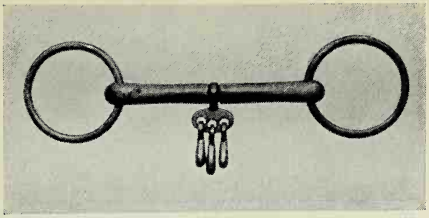


FIG. 14.
For long-rein driving.

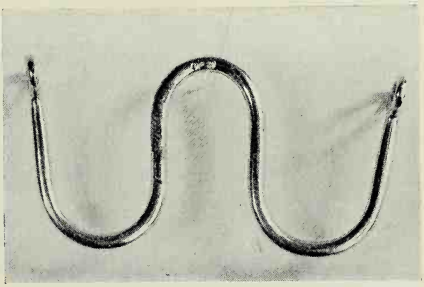


FIG. 15.
Separate tongue bit.

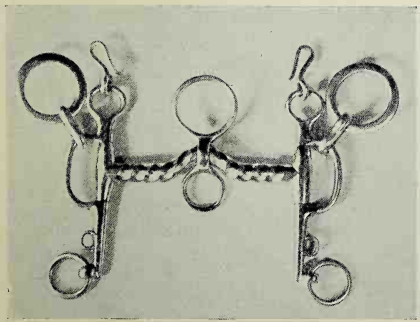


FIG. 16.
Ported Pelham with tongue attachment.

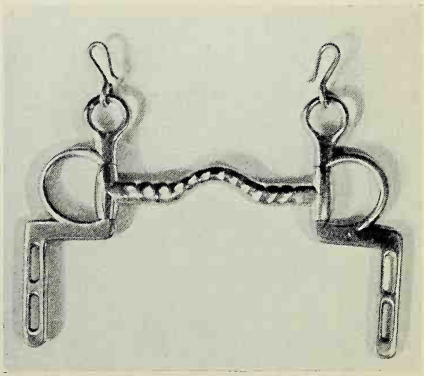


FIG. 17.
Ported Pelham.

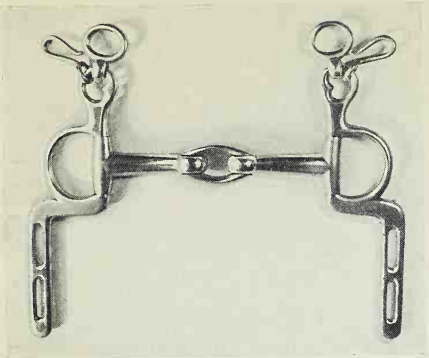


Fig. 18.
Sefton Pelham.

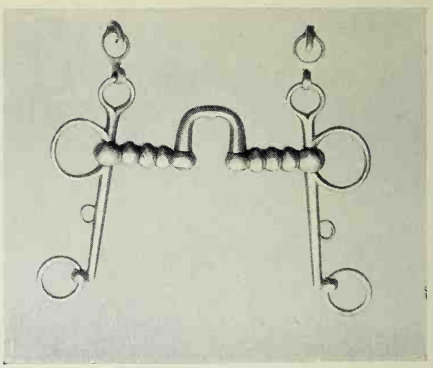


Fig. 19.
Hanoverian Pelham.

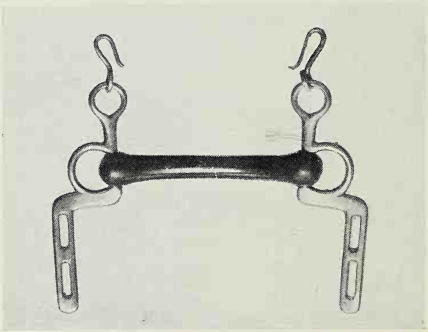


Fig. 20.
Vulcanite mouth Pelham.

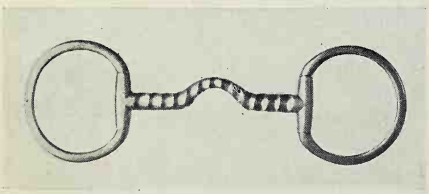


Fig. 21.
Unjointed ported snaffle.

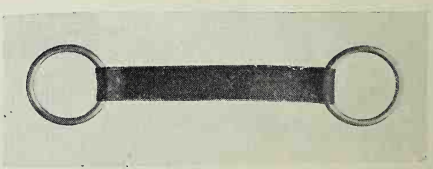


Fig. 22.
Irish Martingale.

found that when a hunter has been taught the direct flexion and complete obedience to the aids, we can change to the twisted snaffle or the ported snaffle (Fig. 21) for hunting, and that with the polo pony one of the various kinds of Pelham answers best for playing.

Looking through a long list of polo ponies, I find that most of mine finished up in a Pelham with a low port (Fig. 17, the Army G.S. bit), sometimes with the rough side to the mouth, and sometimes with the smooth side. This, however, may be too severe for some ponies and some riders, in which case it can be covered with leather, or a half-moon or a straight-bar "Pelham" can be tried either with a steel or a rubber mouth. A recent invention is the half-moon vulcanite covered mouth (Fig. 20), which, in severity, is half-way between the last-mentioned two. A useful bit in certain cases is the "Sefton Pelham" (Fig. 18), and I once had an exceedingly difficult pony whose whole character changed completely for the better when I played him in it. The "Hanoverian Pelham" (Fig. 19) is a severe bit and worth trying on a horse or pony with an insensitive mouth, but as soon as he has learned not to pull against it, the attempt should be made to ride him in something milder.

Indeed, while it is usually wisest to leave well alone, we should always be prepared to put our horses into a less severe bit if we feel we could do so without loss of control. It is a sign that our riding is good if we can change to something milder, but if, as the season advances, a horse becomes less manageable, it is a sign that our aids require refining, or that he requires a rest from hunting or polo and reschooling. If a bit causes a horse to bend his neck in the wrong place, it must be changed at once. Any bit that produces an incorrect direct flexion (provided the horse has been correctly taught) is unsuited to the animal, whether hunter or polo pony, and we must try something else.

With horses that do not take kindly to a curb and snaffle, one of the Pelhams should be tried. They do not find much favour with hunting men, *but they are, nevertheless, very useful in many cases.*

The correct adjustment of the martingale is a part of correct bitting, and is therefore of the greatest importance. For hunting, a ring martingale is the general rule, and, if used with a snaffle, it should be just long enough not to bear down on one of the two reins when the direct flexion is correct. Should a ring martingale be required with a double bridle, it should be on the bottom or curb-rein; and, again, it should be of such a length as not to come into play if the horse is carrying his head correctly. In this case we have the snaffle-rein to raise his head, and the curb-rein assisted by the martingale to induce the direct flexion. If, as is sometimes the practice, we use the ring martingale on the snaffle-rein of a double bridle, we have dual and contradictory action—

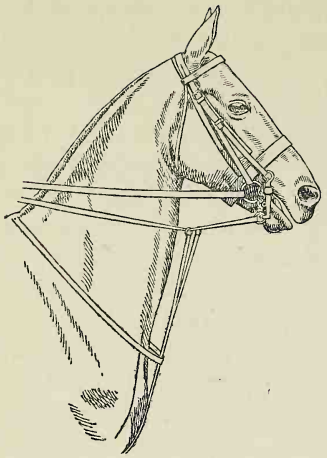


FIG. 23.

Martingale three inches too short.

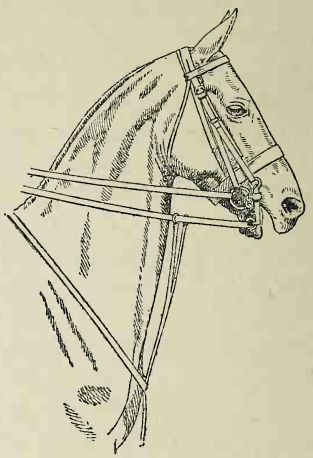


FIG. 24.

Length of martingale correct.

viz., the snaffle to raise the head, *impeded* by the pull of the martingale (Figs. 23 and 24).

Polo ponies should have a standing martingale fastened to the nose-band, and as a preliminary adjustment the length of this should be so that the end just touches the pony's cheek when standing naturally and then the nose-band should be loose enough to admit three fingers (Fig. 25). This length can be altered to suit circumstances. If the pony takes a strong bearing on the standing martingale, it should be padded with sheepskin where it passes under his breast, or it will cause a sore which will necessitate his being thrown out of polo until it has healed. The nose-band should also be padded.

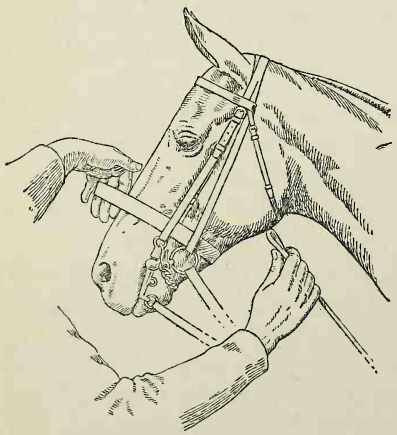


FIG. 25.

Testing the preliminary length of standing martingale and nose-band.

Not only must we keep an open mind regarding the selection of a bit for any particular horse, but we must also be prepared to make a change if he ceases to respond to it. As a very successful and experienced breaker used to express himself: "When a horse gets to like a bit it is time to change it." What he really meant

was that when a bit no longer has the desired effect, a change will often freshen up the horse's mouth and regain his attention. It may be that something more severe is indicated for a time, or something milder; but anyway, a change of some sort will be a great help.

There is a prejudice against using a standing martingale for hunting, but it is useful in certain cases, and is free from danger. There is a standing martingale that hooks on to the rings of the snaffle bit (sometimes called a "Cheshire martingale"). This is advocated by M. H. Hayes ("Illustrated Horse-Breaking"). There is no objection to either of these if carefully adjusted, but I hesitate to recommend them because whenever any one of my family has appeared in the hunting-field using one there has been a procession of well-wishers to tell me that I was risking their necks. One would like to avoid being told after a fall, which may occur at any time and with any bridle, that one has been warned.

289681

The Irish martingale consists of two rings joined together by a short strap (5 or 6 inches) (see Fig. 22). Through these rings one pair of reins is passed. Its only effect is to prevent the reins being thrown over the same side of the neck as the horse tosses his head. It can be used with a snaffle bridle when one is sure of the direct flexion and that the horse will not star-gaze.

Some of the Pelham bits illustrated here have an elbow cheek with two slots to fasten the reins to. The elbow does not make any difference to the leverage or to the severity, but of course the rein in the lower slot makes the bit more severe.

The action of a curb-bit is as follows: The cheek of a curb-bit is a lever. When the curb-reins are pulled, and if the lower end of the cheek is drawn by the rein towards the hand, the leverage would diminish until the cheek is in a straight line with the rein; at this point there would be no leverage. However, as the curb-chain fixes the top half of the lever, and the bars of the mouth fix the mouthpiece—that is, the fulcrum—it would be a rigid affair if the horse could not ease the pressure. By bending the neck and relaxing the jaw to obtain this ease, the lever ceases to act, and the horse is entirely on the snaffle. The action of a curb-bit, therefore, depends on leverage, and its severity on the ratio between the length of the cheek below the mouth of the bit and the length above. Also, the higher the port, the more severe the action, and a tight curb-chain is more severe than a loose one.

I recommend egg-butt joints, as they present a smooth surface to the corners of the lips and cannot wound them. Rustless steel is expensive, but it is useful, not only as a time-saving invention, but also because the joints always work freely, there being no chance of corrosion or rust, and further, as it has not to be cleaned with sand,

the joints do not wear. Leather guards inside the cheeks of a bit must be used with caution, as they change the sensibility of the mouth.

I recommend bridles and reins that button on to the bits with hooked studs, as they afford more encouragement to try different combinations. One can thus have many bits to one bridle.

The correct position of a bit in a horse's mouth is as high as possible, touching without pressing on the corners of the lips, and there should be holes for adjustment higher and lower, and if the curb-chain does not fall into the chin groove, the bit is incorrectly proportioned for the horse in question. The width between cheeks of a full-sized bit is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches; for a polo pony it should be 5 inches.

Any part of saddlery that can only be adjusted one way is probably wrongly fitted. It is too great a coincidence that a strap with the buckle in the last hole available will be exactly right.

There are various contrivances to prevent a horse getting his tongue over the bit, and I have shown two. Of all these, that in Fig. 16 has proved the most efficacious in my experience.

We should always ride our horses and ponies in as mild a bit as possible, consistent with control. The firmer and more independent our seat, the more severe can be the bit we use.

Any wound in the mouth, on the lips or face, caused by bit or bridle, must be healed before we can ride a horse with any hope of success.

It is unwise to ride a horse suffering from a sore place on any part of his body. We cannot gain his full attention, and he will probably be restless and irritable.

A rider should not have any bit which he describes as his favourite, as the horse ought to have a say in the matter. Let him rather say: "My favourite bit is the one in which the particular horse that I am riding goes best." We need not give up a mouth as hopeless until we have tried and failed with every humane bit, even the most unlikely.

Lastly, let me repeat that there exists no bit or other contrivance that can take the place of a reasoned step-by-step course of breaking, and that all a rider can do in this direction is to select by experiment a bit that is suited, not only to his horse's temperament and sensitiveness, but also to his own hands.

CHAPTER VII

TEACHING A HORSE TO OBEY THE AIDS

Introductory

I WILL begin by emphasising the importance of using all the aids always for every change of direction and every exercise and at all paces—walk, trot, canter, and gallop.

In breaking we must begin with the lateral aids and pass by imperceptible stages to the diagonal aids. It is clear, when we consider the point, that if we are riding an imperfectly broken horse and we hold

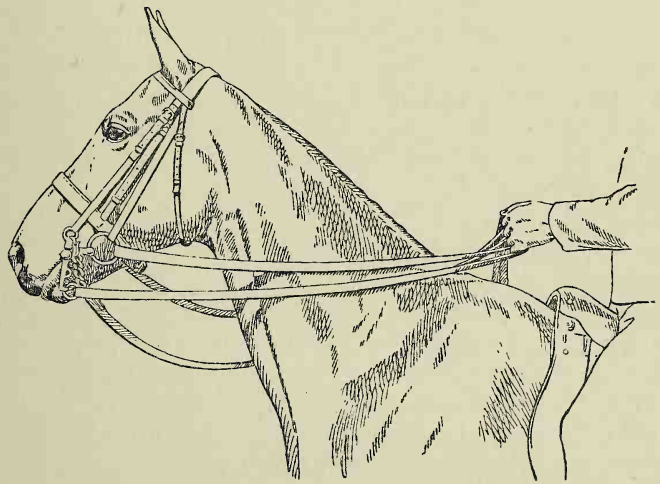


Fig. 26.

The hand moved to the right tightening the near rein and slackening the off rein.

the reins in the left hand (the right being occupied), and we move our left hand to the off-side, it will have the effect of tightening the left rein across the horse's neck and loosening the right rein (Fig. 26). This would make the imperfectly broken horse turn to the left—viz., the opposite way to that which we want. Now, as we have to begin with lateral equitation, this being the only possible way of guiding the unbroken horse, we have to find a means of changing to diagonal equi-

tation, which is the only correct way to ride a completely broken horse. The following instructions are to this end, and if they are carefully followed it will be found that every step leads imperceptibly to the next, and can be understood by an animal of the limited intelligence of the horse.

The aids for stopping are the following: Firstly, even leg pressure as long as the horse keeps himself straight, but one leg will have to be pressed in excess of the other if he moves his hindquarters out to one side or the other. Secondly (and at the same time), the hand held high

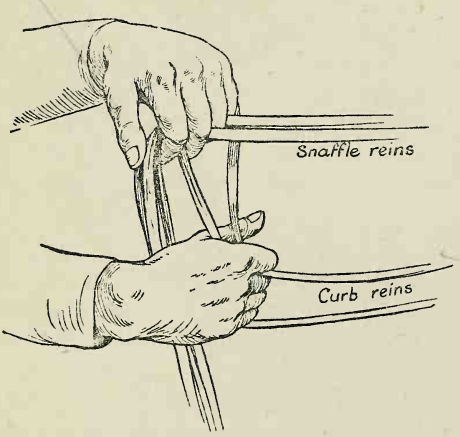


Fig. 27.

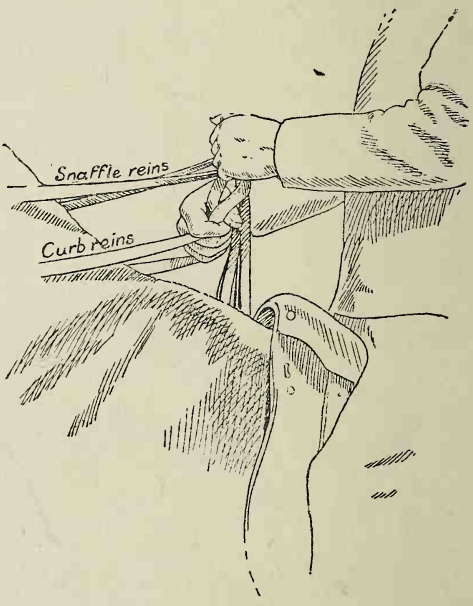


Fig. 28.

The hands manipulating curb and snaffle.

is drawn back. During the early breaking it will be necessary to use both hands so that we can regulate the feel on snaffle and curb, the former to raise the head and the latter to make the horse bend the neck at the poll and to relax the jaw (Figs. 27 and 28).

The aids for turning the *broken* horse are these: The outer rein is pressed against his neck to incline it and the head, in the direction we wish to turn, and the outer leg presses more strongly than the other, but both legs must press to keep the horse up to the bit and to make him get his hind legs well under the centre of gravity.

If we try to stop a horse by the rein alone he will get into the way

of lowering his head, thrusting out his fore legs, and trailing his hind legs behind. This is most uncomfortable for the rider and throws an undue strain on the horse's fore legs ("Horizontal Equilibrium," p. 149).

If we try to guide a horse by the reins alone he will execute part of the turn with his fore-hand and the rest with his hindquarters—outside the circle made by his fore-hand—a highly dangerous and uncomfortable way of turning. This, moreover, is not the natural way for a horse to turn, but, being impeded by the bit in his mouth and to avoid its pressure, he will execute as much of the turn with his hindquarters as his rider will allow.

The reason for emphasising the correct use of the aids is so that the rider shall, from the first day he mounts, always use all the aids, whether walking, trotting, cantering, or galloping. This will soon become habitual, till, even in the middle of the most exciting run with hounds or the most strenuous chukker of polo, he will find himself unconsciously using leg and hand in perfect unison.

The instinctive movement of the inexperienced rider in circumstances of stress is to clutch the reins, but the expert, through long practice and training, will automatically use all the aids in a way appropriate to the occasion.

Preliminary Instruction

The horse will now be at this stage. He will have been taught in the long reins to move forward freely at the sound of a click, and to walk, trot, and canter at the breaker's will; he will not have been allowed to carry his head in a faulty position; he will have been taught to stop or slacken his pace by pressure on the bit. He will not have been allowed to canter leading with the wrong legs; he will be quiet to mount, and he will be improving in condition. To sum up, his course of long reins will have had the same effect as recruit drill and setting-up drill (physical training) which the Army or Navy recruit gets on joining the Services. His further education should be given mounted.

At this stage a double bridle (curb and snaffle) should be substituted for the snaffle. It should be put on, with the curb-chain loose, a quarter of an hour before the horse is ridden, so that he may get used to the feel of it in his mouth. It is of the utmost importance that he should not contract the exasperating habit of getting his tongue over the bit or of hanging it out of his mouth, and the risk of this is thus lessened.

The early lessons should be in a school or *manège*, and the best size is 34 yards by 14 yards. A class of three horses or four ponies can be taken at the same time in a school of this size, but after our pupils

have passed through the preliminary stages we should have only one in the school at a time.

There are some horses which do not take kindly to regular work in the *manège*. With these school work must be alternated with work on the high road; a lane with grass at the sides is the best, although a cinder lane or a field track will do. Nearly the whole of a horse's training can be carried out in the lanes; in fact, I have done so successfully with horses and even ponies that showed a tendency to "turn it up" in the paddock; but it takes much longer, and the breaker should keep an open mind on this point. I have always had at least two *manèges* available and several paddocks. It will be found that we can get better results with some horses in certain paddocks than in others, and just a few will make more rapid progress in the lanes. I am unable to account for this, but the fact is very apparent.

Some breakers advocate riding about a farm with plenty of gate opening as a means of breaking and preparing a horse for hunting and a pony for polo, but this will not teach them anything further than riding about a farm and gate opening, all of which they should be able to do after a couple of weeks in the school.

It will have been seen from the chapter on "The Psychology of the Horse" that the means of teaching a horse anything is by "association of ideas." This not only refers to learning *desirable* attributes, but also in certain cases to the horse acquiring vice. For this reason it is important that he does not get to associate the way back to the stables with cessation from work. A lesson should always finish with a horse performing some act, preferably a new one, correctly, and as a reward the breaker should dismount the moment this new lesson has been learnt. But he must be careful to do so well away from the gate leading home. He should then loosen the girths, make much of him, take the reins over his head, and *lead* him home. Unless this rule is rigidly observed, the horse will certainly become "homesick"—one of the most difficult faults to cure, and one of the most annoying.

Lateral Equitation

Having mounted, and having seen to it that the horse stands rock still during the process, the breaker should settle himself in the saddle and take up the curb-rein (which should hang loose at first). The whip should be in the left hand and pointing down the horse's left shoulder.* He should then press both legs and at the same time click. As the horse has been through the course of long reins, he will move

* Later I find it advantageous and a saving of time to carry two whips, one in each hand, for use on either shoulder.

UNCONSCIOUSLY USING HAND AND LEG IN PERFECT UNISON.

forward at the sound of the click. If he does not he should be touched with the heel, and if necessary gently struck with the whip. Of course, when a horse is broken, the click or even the whip will not be necessary; indeed, the former should never be heard in riding, but it is useful as a connecting link between the course of long-rein driving and the early lessons from his back. Soon the horse will realise that leg pressure, the heel, or the spur, indicate the same as the click—*i.e.*, forward movement—and at the earliest moment we should cease to use the click and rely entirely upon the legs, and if possible never use the voice or the whip again to urge the horse forward. Both, however, may be resorted to in these early stages, and sometimes even later, as a reminder.

If possible, he should be induced to move forward at the walk, but as forward movement is the important point, we should not check him if he starts off at a trot, but gently and gradually pull him back into a walk. We should try to get him to walk briskly round the school with the lightest feel possible on the bit, and at the corners we must be careful not to let him slacken his pace or to turn of his own accord—*i.e.*, without guidance from his rider by means of the rein and leg. In

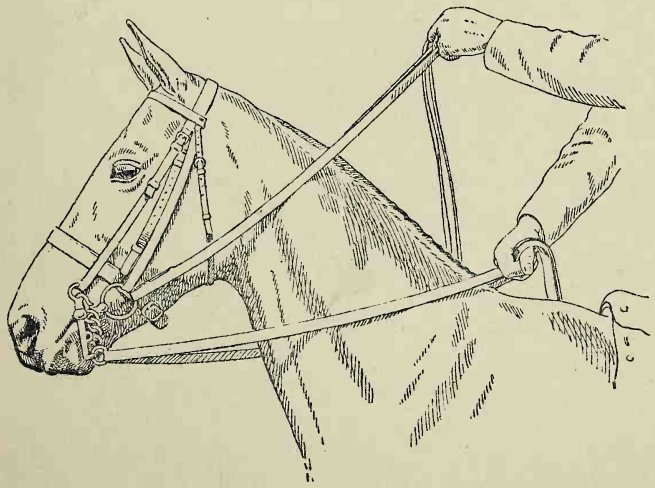


Fig. 29.

The upward pull of the snaffle rein to raise the horse's head.

other words, he must not be allowed to cut the corners or to get himself so far into them that forward movement is checked.

A free, fast walk is of great importance, for unless a horse can walk between four and five miles an hour he can never be considered first class. Five miles an hour is what should be aimed for. If a horse is

a sluggish walker, his rider will never be content with that pace, but will always want to push him into a trot. I am speaking of the walk with a loose rein. The collected walk—*i.e.*, with the head carried at the direct flexion—is somewhat slower, but should also be lively and brisk.* It is therefore of the utmost importance to insist on a free, striding, fast walk from the earliest days of breaking. It would not be too much to expect from a well-broken horse that he should be able to walk, trot, or canter at five miles an hour.

With a free-moving horse we can, from the start, take the oppor-

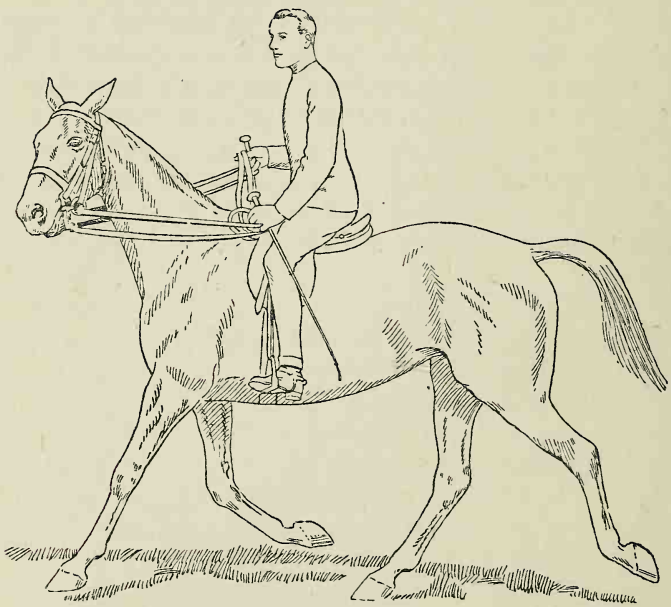


Fig. 30.

Lateral equitation (the unbroken horse).

tunity of beginning the direct flexion by inducing the horse to carry his head high, by occasional light upward touches on the snaffle bit, and if there is a tendency to check forward movement, a strong pressure of both legs will be necessary. It may be necessary to hold the hand so high that the pull of the snaffle-rein is almost along the axis of the horse's head (Fig. 29).

At the corners the inner rein must draw the horse's head towards

* In a long hack to and from hunting or at exercise a collected trot should be alternated with the fast walk, and whenever we come to traffic, a turn, or to any other place where control seems indicated, we should adopt the direct flexion.

the side to which we wish to turn. The rein must not be drawn straight back, as this would have a tendency to check forward movement, and it should therefore be carried outwards.* At the same time both legs must continue to press so as to force the horse well into the corner, and the inner leg should give the stronger indication to help the turn. If the horse shows that he is going to turn too soon—*i.e.*, to cut the corner—the outer rein and leg must predominate until the time comes to make the turn. This is lateral equitation, but it is not correct riding, and only a step in the sequence (Fig. 30). After two or three turns round the enclosure we should go round to the other hand, and the way to make the change is as follows: Two lengths down one of the long sides move diagonally across so as to meet the other long side two lengths from the diagonally opposite corner; this movement is the "incline" (see Chapter VIII.). We should then make the same number of turns round the school in the new direction, halt, make much of the horse, and dismount. This constitutes a lesson, and if there is another horse waiting to be schooled we can now let him take his turn while horse number one takes a rest outside the enclosure.

The second lesson should commence with a recapitulation of the first, but the number of turns round the school should be increased, and more than one change of hand can be performed. If the horse takes kindly to this walking round the school, we can try a trot to both hands, changing direction by the incline as before.

These lessons should be continued until the horse will walk and trot freely to either hand. If the horse does well, opportunity should be taken to halt frequently, to make much of him, and to dismount, and we must further be guided by his physical condition in deciding the duration of the lessons. It does more harm than good to continue a lesson when a horse is tired; his attention wanders, his movements become slovenly, and, worst of all, he will have a tendency to hang his head. Free forward movement with the head carried high is of vital importance, and if this forward movement comes naturally to a horse, and has not to be created by the rider—*i.e.*, if the horse has not to be forced forward—he will be an easier animal to break, and the result will be more successful than if "impulsion" has to come from the rider's legs. The horse that is always ready to slip back into a slower pace is not one from which we can expect good results. Similarly a horse with a natural high carriage of the head is a simpler proposition than one whose head and neck have to be raised by manipulation of the rein and bit, while I know of no method of riding that will counteract

* Bearing in mind that we wish to make the horse bridle wise we can from the very beginning accompany this outward pull of the guiding rein with pressure of the opposite rein against the horse's neck.

the tendency for the horse to be what is called "overbent."* Thus it will be seen that to continue a lesson after a horse has lost his energy through fatigue not only retards his breaking, but is also a retrograde step.

Teaching the Horse to obey the Leg

When the horse will move freely round the school at the walk and the trot, and will execute the changes of hand by means of the incline and the right angle turns, he will be ready to be taught prompt and accurate obedience to the leg (other than simple forward movement) as a preliminary to the passage.

We must begin by teaching the turn on the fore-hand, and the first lessons are given dismounted. With the horse in the centre of the school, the breaker places himself on the near side in front of his shoulder, facing his hindquarters, and takes the reins in his left hand about a foot from the bit (Fig. 31).†

In his right hand he has a cutting-whip; with this he touches the horse behind the girth in the spot where the heel or spur would come if he were mounted, and at the same time he draws his horse's head forward and towards him, stepping sideways as necessary. The object at the moment is to get the horse to move his hindquarters away from the whip, and the reins serve at first as an auxiliary aid, no horse being able to resist this dual indication.‡ Great care must be taken to make the horse cross the hind foot nearest the breaker *in front* of the stationary one by never allowing him to rein back; it is better to gain ground slightly. If, on the contrary, the hind foot passes behind the stationary one, or if it moves up to it without going beyond it, this is wrong, and it is equally wrong if the other hind foot is carried directly sideways; a slight forward movement is necessary in both cases. A good bold step in front of and well across the stationary foot must be aimed for, and, if there is a tendency for a horse to avoid this, a tap with the whip while the moving foot is off the ground, and while at the same

* The bearing-rein properly adjusted will insure a horse carrying his head correctly, but it is seldom, if ever, used in riding. Although I can well understand the necessity for complete freedom of a horse's head in the hunting field, I am unable to account for the prejudice against a bearing-rein on a polo pony and why it is more objectionable than a standing martingale. A polo pony that has to be ridden even in a tight martingale is a saleable article, but I doubt if any player would entertain the purchase of a pony that required a bearing-rein, although its use might make many now unmanageable animals serviceable.

† With a slack horse which exhibits an undue tendency to get behind the bit, it is of assistance to take the reins over his head; it is easier to draw him forward with the reins held thus.

‡ As a horse should never turn on his fore-hand, it may seem anomalous to teach him this mode of turning, but, as will be seen, it is only a preliminary and necessary step.

time the reins are drawn forward, will stimulate him to make this well-marked stride.

As the object of this lesson is to make the horse answer to the touch of the whip only, the indication with the reins should only be an assistance as long as the horse does not understand what we want and

FIG. 31.

The turn on the fore-hand (dismounted)—first lesson.

appears to resist the tap with the whip, or if he shows a tendency to rein back. His expression must be watched, and if he scowls, lays back his ears, or swishes his tail unduly, the next thing we may look for is a cow-kick at the whip or at the breaker. This should be avoided if possible, and the way to do so is, to increase the indication with the rein and bit and lessen the indication with the whip, and then gradually

increase the indication with the whip and lessen that of the hand as the strangeness wears off.

Here, as usual, we should be content with little at a time, and as soon as a stride has been obtained the horse should be made much of and led forward round the school. Of course, these lessons should include the turn to both hands, and for the turn to the offside the breaker should

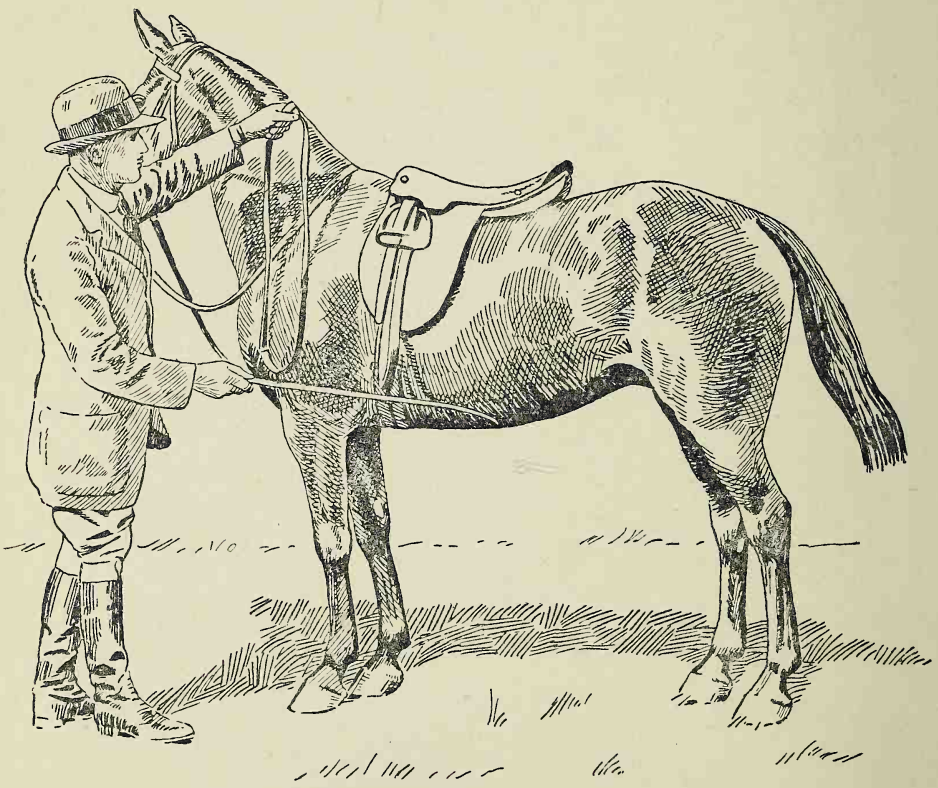


FIG. 32.

The turn on the fore-hand (dismounted)—second lesson.

stand in a similar position on the offside, the reins being held in the right hand and the whip in the left.

This stage is not complete, and this series of lessons should continue till we have obtained a free and exact turn on the fore-hand to both sides. With the reins still held by the breaker in one hand, the horse must move with his head held high and the neck turned neither to the right nor left, and should answer only to the touch of the whip. The fore feet, meanwhile, are lifted and put down alternately to enable the

horse to pivot completely round them. Many strides at a time should not be practised, but frequent halts should be made, accompanied by pats on the neck, with the object of impressing him and of avoiding irritation by prolonging the exercise. The oftener we can recommence the better, and the shorter each spell the better.

If a horse has a tendency to carry his head too low during this exercise, we can put on the long-rein saddle and bearing-rein, which always insures the correct carriage of the head and neck, but this is not advocated if the horse shows any tendency to rein back or to get behind his bit.

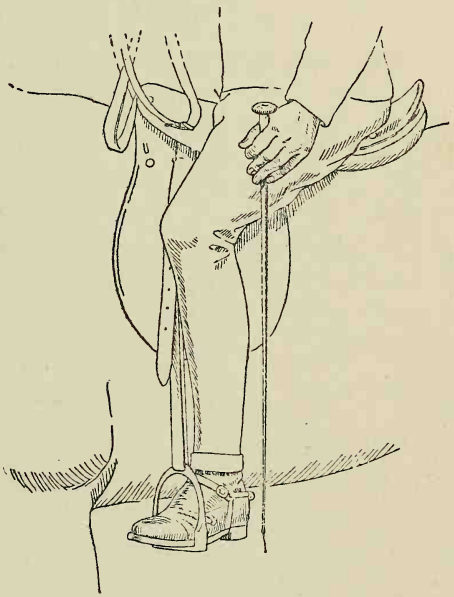


Fig. 33.

Helping the leg with the whip.

Whether or not the next stage is omitted depends very much on the temperament of the horse and how well and accurately he has learned the turn on the fore-hand as described above. I sometimes omit it, but it is useful in the case of a horse that is slow in learning to give way to the whip alone, and that continues to require its fore-hand drawing towards the breaker —*i.e.*, finds it difficult to get beyond the turn on the centre. In this case, instead of persisting, we can change the hold on the reins as follows: We must first of all decide whether to use the curb-rein or the snaffle-rein. Only where a horse carries his head well up should we use the curb-rein; with all others the snaffle. I will describe the turn to the left (to the right, of course, the aids are reversed). The breaker, as before, places himself in front of the near shoulder. The off rein is passed over the horse's neck, which acts as a pulley; this and the near rein are held in the left hand, the pressure equal on each, with the whole palm separating them (Fig. 32). By a turn of the wrist the near rein can be tightened to assist the whip indication by bringing the horse's head to the left, and then the neck can be straightened again by tightening the off rein. Here again great care must be taken to prevent the horse getting behind his bit, and the tendency, if it exists, must be counteracted by the breaker easing the reins and stepping towards the horse's quarters, which will be inter-

preted as a threat and will stop any retrograde movement. This last exercise requires practice, keen observation, and a certain nimbleness on the part of the breaker.

It has taken many words to describe this preliminary to the turn on the fore-hand, but it is not a lengthy affair really, and one lesson of half an hour will often suffice, and even with a slack, dull-witted horse I cannot remember having had to prolong it beyond three or four half-hour lessons.

Turning on the Fore-hand Mounted

The next step is to teach the horse the turn on the fore-hand, with the breaker mounted and using his legs and heels instead of the whip. He should again begin in the middle of the school, and as a connecting link should, at first, use the whip as well as leg pressure (Fig. 33). Gradually he should discontinue the use of the whip and use pressure or the heel only.* Two or three lessons should suffice, and as soon as the horse will pivot freely round his fore-end, with his head high and his neck straight to his front, answering to leg pressure, or, if a horse has insensitive sides, to the heel or spur, we are ready to teach him the "passage."

The Passage and Direct Flexion

The passage in itself is of little practical value except for a charger and to make a polo pony ride off, but it is a step towards making a horse bridle wise and towards making him follow with his hind feet in the same track as his fore feet; and unless this accurate obedience to the leg is obtained we cannot hope to prevent a horse from shying or to keep a hunter from running out at his fences, and last, but not least, without it a horse cannot be prevented from cantering falsely or disunited, nor can a polo pony be taught to jump round on its hocks.

As the passage should be performed with great vigour, it is best to take advantage of forward movement which will insure the horse being wound up and full of energy. I will begin by describing the method of commencing the passage to the right. Put the horse into a trot round the school to the left, do an incline aiming to hit the opposite long side about half-way down, then, while still at the trot, and just before he approaches the side, press both legs to prevent him stopping, but with the left leg more strongly so as to obtain a side-step to the right. At the same time, with the hands held high, the right rein

* We should note that the more we can keep his fore feet in one spot the better. If we allow the horse to make two concentric circles, a small one with his fore feet and a larger with his hind feet, he will be behind his bit.

should be drawn outwards to the right, and the left rein should be pressed against the horse's neck (see Fig. 34).*

If the horse is a slow learner we can be content with one side-step: then make much of him and let him walk round the school. Some horses with sensitive sides learn to passage quickly, and even at the first attempt will execute three or four side-steps more or less correctly and with sufficient vigour. The breaker must be guided by the horse's aptitude in deciding how much to be content with in the first lesson, but he must be prepared for a certain amount of real or apparent resistance, due either to a failure of the horse to understand what is required, or to his defending himself against the performance of a somewhat irksome task. It will be the simplest way to describe each of the horse's defences and the method of overcoming them. As he approaches the side of the school, being used to an ordinary change of hand, he will want to straighten himself on to the track. Prevented by a vigorous use of the left leg, he will find himself confronted by the wall. This may cause him to want to stop. A strong use of both heels (the left one more than the right, so that he does not straighten himself) will prevent him getting behind his bit, and will force him to remain at an angle to the wall. Should he give way too easily and place himself at right angles, the breaker should carry the hands to the right, the right rein being carried well away to that side, and the left rein pressed against the horse's neck. We should never passage at a greater angle to the wall—*i.e.*, to any direction—than forty-five degrees; it will then

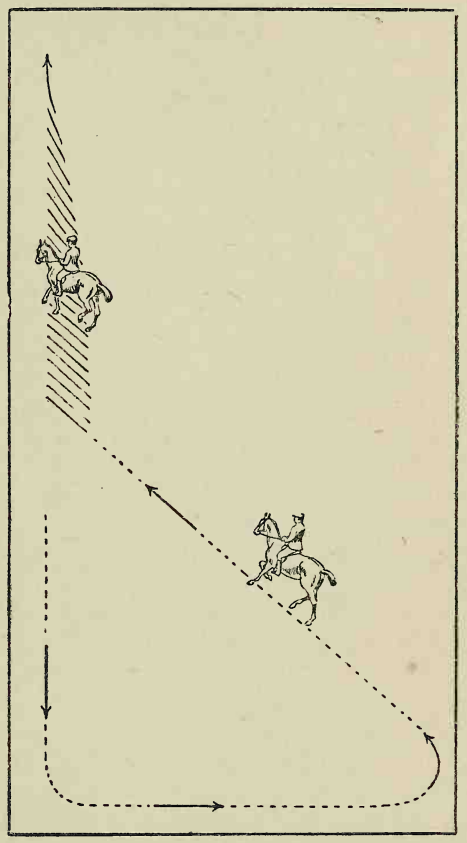


Fig. 34.

First lesson in the passage

* If this last movement is studied it will be seen that it is another step towards making him bridle wise and towards teaching him to turn on his hocks.

be found easier to insure that the horse crosses his feet well in front of one another (Fig. 35). During all this time the head must be held high and slightly inclined in the direction towards which he is moving. After having performed a few steps at the passage, he should be straightened on to the track again by increasing the pressure of the opposite leg, and we should walk him round the school while making much of him.* When we wish to repeat the lesson, we should again put him into a trot, and at the finish of the incline, and while he is still diagonally placed, recommence as before. Until we have taught the direct flexion, we should be content with about four strides in vigorous, cadenced time to either hand.

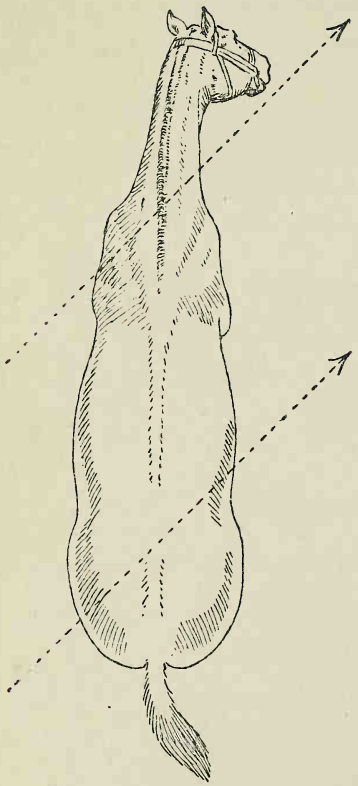


Fig. 35.

Passaging at 45°.

In this exercise the direct flexion is varied to this extent: the neck (high up at the poll) should also be bent slightly in the direction to which the horse is passaging, and the horse's head should also incline slightly in this direction.† This position is difficult, and the beginner may not be able to compass it, but it should be always before his mind, and he should always be trying to obtain it, because the passage will not be correct, and later the turns will not be executed correctly until we have the horse thus leading with his head. This is "the lateral flexion." In an exaggerated form it belongs rather to the *haute école* than to ordinary riding. The reverse of this is very bad riding. If we passage the horse with his head turned away from the direction to which he is going, or if the turn is made in the same faulty way, we shall not have a perfectly broken horse.

The instruction for the lateral flexion is easy to give, but often difficult to carry out. The horse has at his command so many defensive

* We must be careful not to relax and make much of the horse until we have definitely straightened him, which is part of the lesson.

† Lateral flexion (*q.v.*).

movements, all of which are calculated to defeat the rider's wishes, and all of which must be countered by opposing one of the aids.

Although it is never possible to predict exactly at what point we can change from one lesson to another, it will be found that the direct and lateral flexions can be usefully taught during these lessons in the passage; but it is not possible to finish the lessons in the direct flexion until we have obtained a free obedience to the leg, and we cannot obtain the correct and finished passage until we have obtained the complete and finished flexions. So these two lessons must always be interlocked, and each must be a complement of the other. During the teaching of the passage we should constantly attempt to obtain the position of the

FIG. 36.

The passage (the direct and lateral flexions begun).

head and neck leading to the direct and lateral flexions, and, in order to obtain the direct flexion, obedience to the leg will be essential (Figs. 36 and 37).

We should not consider this exercise complete until we can passage freely round the school with the direct and lateral flexions correctly

made, and we should further be able to make the changes of hand all performed at the passage. But because this work is irksome, not a natural movement, and, moreover, because it is only a means to an end, being just a step in the sequence, the stops for rest and reward should be frequent.

At this point also we can seize the opportunity to vary the monotony of school work by taking the horse into the open, hacking him along

Fig. 37.

The passage (the direct and lateral flexions begun).

the lanes, preferably in company. The presence of another horse will stimulate the beginner to forward movement, so necessary in teaching the direct flexion, which we can perform, as we ride along, twenty or thirty times in the course of an hour. With the left hand holding the snaffle-reins, held high, we raise the horse's head, and with the legs we force him forward; then, by playing on the curb-reins in the right hand, we try to obtain the bend of the neck high up at the poll, accompanied by a slight relaxation at the jaw (Figs. 27 and 28). We should be

content with little at first; the important point is to seize the fleeting moments when we obtain the slightest giving in, to relax the pressure of rein and leg, and to make much of the horse.

Any deviation from the straight by any part of the horse destroys the direct flexion. He will at first try to avoid it. He may try to lower his head; in this case we must raise it by little touches on the snaffle with the left hand held very high. If he then tries to stop, we press him forward by a vigorous use of the legs. Then he may try to avoid control by swinging his quarters to one side or the other. Strong opposition by the opposite leg will counter this. Then there may be difficulty in making him bend at the poll and relax his jaw; in this case we must use the curb-rein very persistently in little touches till he gives in, and then, when all these defences have been overcome, there comes the time to let everything loose, reins and legs, to allow the horse to walk quietly forward and to make much of him. We must not, of course, hold the horse at the direct flexion for more than a few strides while he is learning, for although his general carriage will gradually benefit by this exercise, the actual direct flexion is only required for stops, changes of direction, and, further, to place him in readiness for any movement requiring a special effort.

These lessons—the passage and the flexions—require great vigour from the rider, but it is pleasing to note the quick result if we are patient, energetic, and painstaking, and, above all, never rough. One can often bring a horse back to the stable after an hour's ride, showing a very marked and encouraging improvement in his general way of going.

We should not attempt to get the real direct flexion until our pupil has got so far that he will move forward freely at the pressure of the legs, and readily give way if one leg is pressed more than the other, and it may be necessary with a lethargic, easy-going horse to use spurs either with or without rowels.*

If these lessons in the direct flexion are interspersed with lessons in the passage, the horse will arrive at full knowledge of both at the same time.

The Canter

We have now got to the point where we must no longer delay teaching the horse the simple school movements at the canter, although, with a very well-balanced horse with a natural good carriage of the head, we may, with advantage, have begun earlier.

* The rowels of new spurs are too sharp; they should have the points snipped off with a pair of pliers and then rubbed on a stone. If they are used without this preparation they draw blood, which is unsightly, and defeats their object by diverting the horse's attention to a painful spot. Care must also be taken that the rowels of spurs revolve freely; they are apt to get clogged with sweat, hair, and cleaning material.

It is not always easy to tell from his back whether the horse is leading correctly, so it is useful to have an assistant to call out "Wrong!" if the horse does not lead with the correct hind leg. We can see for ourselves whether he is leading correctly in front, and we only require this help in case we have failed to notice that he is going disunited.

At first it is best to start the canter from the trot. We begin while circling to the right. As we walk down one of the long sides of the school we obtain the direct flexion, press the horse forward into a trot, and at the first corner increase the leg pressure till the horse springs into a canter. We select this corner, as the horse, being faced by two consecutive turns, will have an instinctive tendency to lead correctly, and, moreover, the aids employed to make the turn are the same as those employed to make him lead with the inner legs. I will recapitulate the aids: The right rein is drawn outwards, the left rein is pressed against the horse's neck, and the left leg is used more strongly than the right. We continue to ride round the school, taking care that he follows with his hind legs in the track of his fore legs, and that he does not slip back into a trot at the corners and that he does not cut them. If he shows reluctance to break into a canter, it may be necessary to hit him down the shoulder, and it would not be out of place to click to him also by way of a reminder. If he leads with the wrong fore leg or is disunited, we must pull him back into a trot at once and begin again at the first of two of the end corners.* If he canters correctly a few times round the school, we must pull into a walk, make much of him, and start again. If the horse shows aptitude, we can, after restarting some five or six times, practise the same exercise to the other hand. Here we may be faced with the old difficulty of the horse persistently performing the last learnt lesson, and he may show a disposition to lead with the outside leg or legs, which may necessitate using the aids very vigorously till we have him leading correctly.

We must be guided by circumstances in selecting the time to begin to teach the change of hand at the canter. If we have not had much trouble in getting him to lead correctly, we can begin in the second lesson. At first we should use the whole of the school. The incline should be performed in the usual way, but of course at the canter. We will assume that we are circling to the left. Towards the middle of the diagonal we pull the horse into the trot for a few paces, and as we approach the opposite side apply the left leg strongly while carrying the hands to the right, and execute a half-passage, then press the horse into a canter once more (Fig. 38). He should now strike off with the off legs leading and on the other circle—that is, to the right. As he

* It is a help if, before his lesson, he has had his exercise in the long reins and has been cantered to either hand.

becomes expert in this we can lessen the number of paces of the trot until we omit them and the half-passage altogether and make him change at the canter.

There is an exact moment in the canter when the horse can make the change of leg. It serves no useful purpose to describe what each leg is doing at that particular moment, although instantaneous photography has shown us. The rider must learn by practice *to feel* when the change can be made, and as long as the horse is learning he should only be asked to do so at this moment. Later he must without hesitation change with every deviation at whatever speed he is galloping.

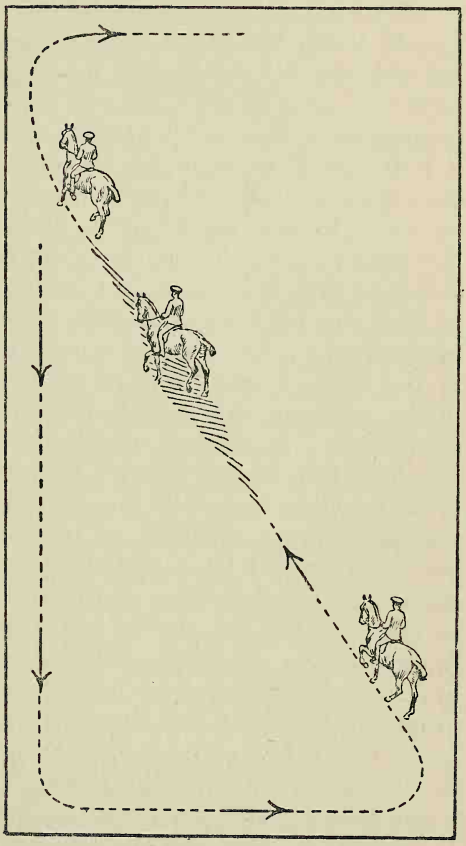


FIG. 38.
First lesson in the change of leg at the canter.

DIAGONAL EQUITATION

If the above instructions have been carefully followed, the breaker will find that he has gradually ceased to guide the horse with the rein and leg on the same side, and that he has substituted the diagonal aids. If he has borne in mind that lateral equitation is not correct riding and that diagonal equitation is the goal, he will find that, as he has always accompanied the pull at the inner rein with pressure of the outer rein against the horse's neck, he can by now guide the horse's fore-hand by pressure on the neck alone. Further, if he has constantly had before him the importance of keeping the horse's hind legs in the track of his fore legs, he will have found (while still using both legs at the turns) that the way to do this is to use the outer leg with greater strength. It is not one of the horse's natural defences to carry his hind legs to the inside of the turn, but, as stated earlier in this chapter, he will execute as much of the turn on his fore-hand as his rider will let him—*i.e.*, will try to carry his hind part outside the circle.

So it will be seen that in following out the above instructions diagonal equitation will have taken the place of lateral equitation, and, further, that the horse has become "bridle wise" in the process.

The Rein Back

Here again it is impossible to say at what point in the breaking we should teach the horse the rein back. A horse with a tendency to get behind the bit, although he should be *taught* the rein back, should never be *practised* in it beyond, perhaps, a stride or two, after which he should be driven forward with the greatest vigour. On the contrary, a horse with a tendency to put weight on the fore-hand and lean on his bridle should be taught to rein back early, and constantly practised in it. There is no harm in trying to teach a horse to rein back from the saddle, but, should there be any resistance, it is better to dismount and give him his first lesson on foot. The breaker should stand in front of the horse, take a snaffle-rein in each hand, gently press the bit against the horse's mouth, and try to induce him to take one stride. If the horse raises his head unduly and appears about to sit back on his hocks without moving his feet, it will be useless to try to get him to rein back. He is not in a position to raise a hind leg, which must be the first movement in this exercise. It is the only lesson in which it is permissible to lower the horse's head so as to lighten the hind part, which must be the first to move. If we succeed in getting one pace back we should be satisfied, draw the horse forward, walk round the school, and make much of him. Gradually we can increase the number of paces in the rein back, but I never advocate more than six or eight, followed by a walk forward. The rein back itself, without this forward movement immediately following, is not a complete lesson; the two must be practised together. If there is difficulty in making the horse take even a few steps back, the breaker should threaten to tread on his fore hoofs or tap him lightly with a whip on the front of the fore legs, while holding all four reins in one hand.

When we attempt the same movement mounted we must try as far as possible to get the horse to perform it without lowering his head—*i.e.*, from the direct flexion. If he jibs and resists, we ought to be able to feel which foot is the next in turn to move, and then either by leg or rein indications get the horse to raise the immobile foot. Each time, after we get a few paces of the rein back, we should also force the horse forward with a very correct direct flexion before we relax and make much of him. Lessons in the rein back should not finish until we can get the horse to rein back four, five, six, seven, or eight paces at will, and to move forward when asked, either at the walk, trot, or canter on

either leg. This is an excellent test, not only of the horse's obedience to the aids, but also of the refinement and correctness of the breaker's aids.

It is as well here to recapitulate the point at which we have arrived. The horse will have learned the direct and the lateral flexions, he will obey the legs readily and will never canter either falsely or disunited, he will be bridle wise; and this is as far as we need go with the hunter before teaching him to jump, or with a pony before we start his special training. It is, moreover, a point to which we can train a horse of almost any size or conformation. Further exercises will be for the polo pony and for the horse of a rider who wishes something handier than what we have described above.

Even if we have to deal with a partially broken horse, we should be wise to put him through the whole course, omitting none of the steps. It will, however, not be necessary to spend much time on the early stages; for instance, lateral equitation would probably be the means of guidance to which he was accustomed, and he would most likely have a rudimentary idea of giving way to leg pressure and of reining back.

CHAPTER VIII

SCHOOL MOVEMENTS

THE following diagrams showing school movements may be useful to the student. There are, of course, many more which are taught in the Army schools, but they are variations of these, and are used more with the object of teaching riding than of horse-breaking. I do not find that the breaker need practise any other

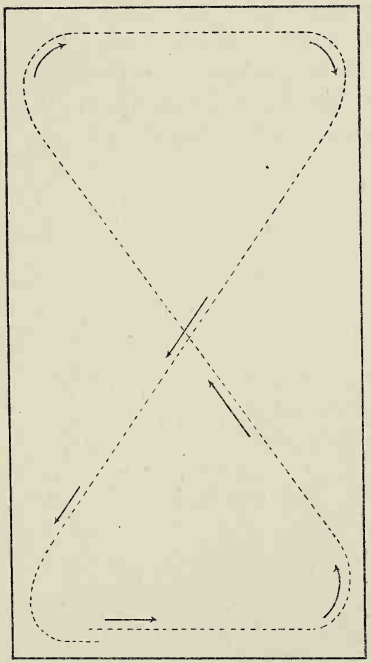


FIG. 39.

Change of direction by means of the simple incline.

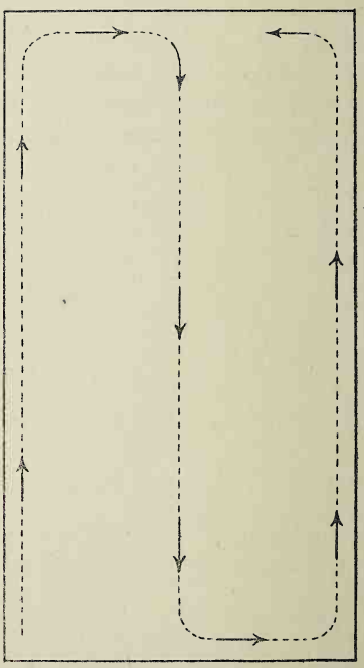


FIG. 40.

Change of direction by means of right-angle turns.

movements than those described. The great point is to insist on them being made with accuracy and energy, and, above all, in a balanced, cadenced manner from the direct flexion. Not many are fortunate enough to have a riding-school available, but we can improvise a *manège*

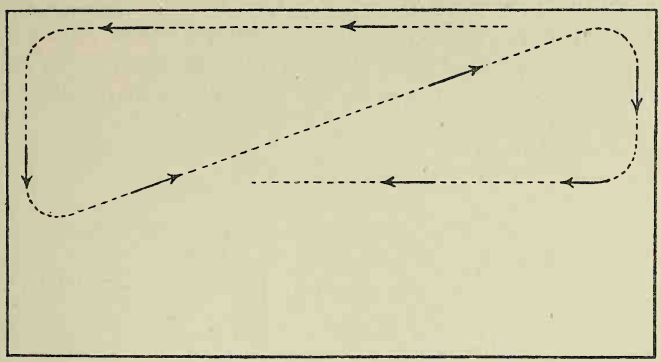


FIG. 43.
Elongated "figure of eight," using half the school.

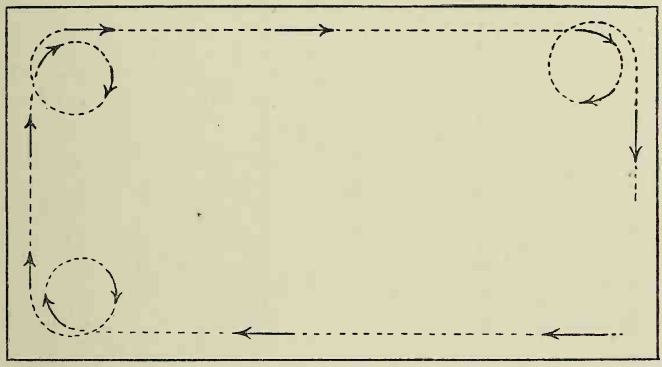


FIG. 42.
Circling, using the corners of the school to prevent the horse from increasing the circle.

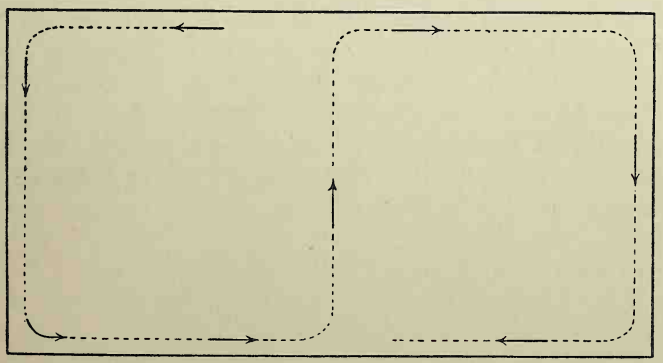


FIG. 41.
Change of direction by means of right-angle turns.

of sheep hurdles, which answers well so long as the weather is fine and the going good. If there is room it is best to have two or three *manèges*, so that when the surface of one gets cut up we can give it a rest and let it recover. In the winter-time it will be a great help if we can throw

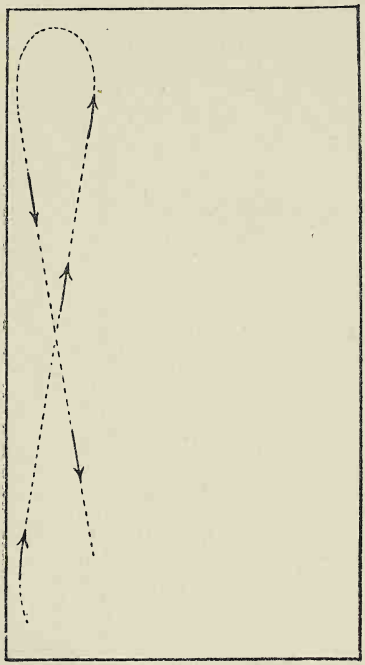


FIG. 44.

Elongated "figure of eight," using a quarter of the school.

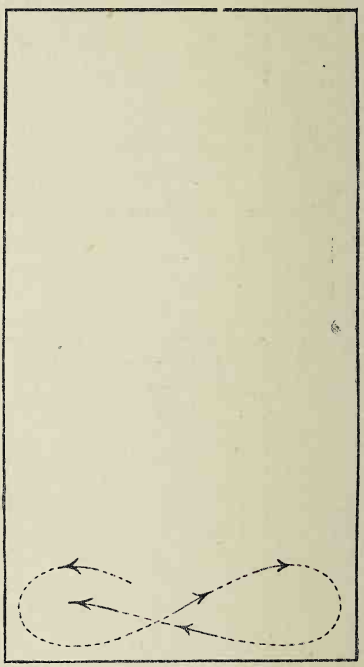


FIG. 45.

"Figure of eight," using the end of the school.

down cinders over the track, especially at the corners, which tend to become slippery. A horse will seldom attempt to jump out, even though the walls may not be more than three or four feet high. Naturally, if we can have a real cinder foundation and six or eight feet high pallisading made of matchboard, this is far the best, as the horse cannot see through or over, and it is easier to keep him attentive. The best size for a *manège* is 100 feet by 40 feet.

HE MUST TREAD WARILY TO AVOID A FALL.

CHAPTER IX

THE HUNTER

THE only work to which a horse can be put from which it derives any pleasure, and in which it takes any personal interest, is fox-hunting.

This is probably due to an atavistic trait. The instinct of self-preservation in the wild ancestor would account for the joy in hunting and slaying a carnivorous animal. I can explain in no other way the keenness in a hunt and satisfaction at a kill some horses display, even though they may never have seen hounds before.

The best that can be said of other saddle horses is that they are willing, sometimes even cheerful, slaves. I have dealt with this point in Chapter II., and so I will not enlarge upon it here. It must not be assumed that *all* horses like hunting, although it is certain that the majority do, and unless they do they are not, to my mind, hunters at all. A good hunter, not necessarily very fast, will somehow make it easy for one to see the whole of a good hunt, because he himself is interested and feels keenly being left behind. These are good hunters, but there are just a few that hate the sight of hounds or anything to do with hunting; these are worse than bad hunters, or, as I prefer to phrase it, "not hunters at all."

A good hunter must be sure-footed (this is largely a matter of conformation and soundness) and temperate (this is largely a matter of breaking, bitting, riding, *and feeding*); he must correctly weigh up the situation at every fence that has to be negotiated, notice inequalities and holes in the ground, and tread warily to avoid a fall (this is generally supposed to be a mental quality—"personality" if you like—but if worked out logically it will be found to be an outcome of the instinct of self-preservation). In some horses this instinct is so deficient that they will fall over and over again, never seeming to learn caution or to profit by experience. This, needless to say, is another kind of bad hunter. Some young horses are so keenly interested in the performance of hounds that they will gallop with their eyes glued to the pack, and may fail to see an obstacle until too late for any result except a refusal or an awkward and discomposing leap. These are not good hunters yet, but there is hope for them, and they often turn out well. Others are so desperately afraid of being left behind that they want to go too

fast, and, misinterpreting the steadying pull it is necessary to give them as they approach a jump, will take hold of the bit, stiffen their necks, and try to rush their fences. Then also we may be faced with the problem of the young horse who, mistrusting every take-off, every landing, and every fence, jumps too big and wildly. All the last have the makings of good hunters in them, and with experience come prudence and judgment, till in time we get the blasé old friend who knows better than we do ourselves everything that is going on in the course of a hunt, and just how to take every fence safely and with the least exertion. There is even hope for the peeping, exasperating animal that stops and glares at every ditch as if he expected the devil himself to pop out. Such horses may jump uncomfortably, but they seldom fall, and time and practice bring confidence and freedom.

A good hunter is a wonderful companion. Your comfort, enjoyment, safety, and your reputation for courageous riding are in his keeping, and a feeling of co-operation and mutual enjoyment between mount and man is essential to the full appreciation of a day's hunting.

There is such an infinite variety of faults, any of which will remove a hunter one or more degrees from first class, that it is impossible to enumerate them; but there is no doubt that a man's best hunter is one that enables him to see any kind of hunt in comfort and safety.

The preliminary breaking of the hunter should be exactly on the lines laid down in the preceding chapters. In addition he should be taught to stand quietly at covert side, to hack pleasantly between coverts with other horses all round him, to gallop temperately, whether the hunt is fast or slow, to tolerate being crushed and pushed by other horses in crowded gateways, and to jump a variety of fences safely and according to their requirements. Some horses are born hunters, and all the above points come naturally to them; others require tuition, correction, and practice. There is no doubt that the less teaching a horse requires in these directions, the better hunter he will be. I never see much hope in the attempt to make a slovenly, lethargic, or, on the other hand, a hot-headed horse into an enjoyable hunter. Improved condition and breaking may, of course, do much, and it is true that a horse whose ardour and impetuosity we have to restrain is always preferable, being a more promising proposition, safer in every way, than one that has to be urged and driven. But some never cheer up, and others never tone down. I have been at pains to corroborate this. Questions among my friends have elicited the fact that their favourite hunter can always be described as a natural jumper, hardly requiring schooling, and of a placid disposition unless hounds are running, controllable but keen, well mannered though impetuous (but not unduly so) when there is a fox ahead.

HE STOPS AND GLARES AT EVERY DITCH AS IF HE EXPECTED THE DEVIL HIMSELF TO POP OUT.

There is not to-day the same necessity for the long hacks to the meet. The motor-car has obviated this, and the tarmac roads have taken away any pleasure there was in hacking. People nowadays generally motor to meets more than five miles away, and, in my opinion, wisely, not only on account of the slippery roads and inconsiderate motor-driving, but also because I think we should take full advantage of all labour- and time-saving devices; that is the purpose for which they have been invented. It is the same as regards hacking home; no matter how far afield a hunt may take us, it is usually possible to get in touch with one's groom and motor by telephone. The last two are immensely important adjuncts to hunting nowadays, when so many of its supporters are business men to whom time is money, and women for whom a long hack is such a tiring affair. It will therefore be seen that, unlike what obtained in the old days, there is not the same need for a hunter to be a comfortable hack, although a rough-actioned horse with a constant desire to exceed the pace of a hound-jog between coverts can turn what should be an enjoyable day into a tiring and uncomfortable one.

The habit that some hunters have of worrying their riders while hacking between coverts is probably contracted in the early stages of breaking, or shall we say owing to the absence of any systematic early breaking? And I am inclined to think, also, that the same often applies to horses restless at covert side and that kick in gateways. So the early breaking of the hunter should be exactly as I have advocated in the preceding chapters. The direct and lateral flexion and obedience to the leg are no less important if we aim at a hunter of the highest class than if we are making a polo pony, and a hunter should be capable of being guided by one hand.

Schooling to Jump

The point to aim for is to get the horse to jump easily and fluently. With this end in view it is important that the obstacles over which he is schooled outside the hunting-field should be easy to negotiate. If he is not faced with fences requiring great exertion, he will get to like jumping, or at all events not get to dislike it. We can compare his feelings in this connection with our own. Most riders will face a much more formidable obstacle when hounds are running than when out for an exercising hack, and it is so with horses. At school they should be taught to jump easy places freely, and out hunting they will not fail you at the bigger ones.

It is well to bear in mind that a sound take-off is essential. If a young horse is asked to jump off slippery ground, he will probably fall,

and the next time he will get too close to the fence, jump badly, or refuse. Even an experienced horse will jump badly out of slippery ground.

There are many and various methods adopted by breakers to teach a horse to be a light, flippant, and safe jumper over a variety of obstacles, but once a horse has a notion of clearing a fence, the hunting-field is the best schooling-ground. Success may attend any method, although I believe that if we start on the following lines we are surest of success.

It is imperative that the early lessons should be taught without a weight on the horse's back and with no pressure on the bit. The obstacles should be very low at first and should be unbreakable, and

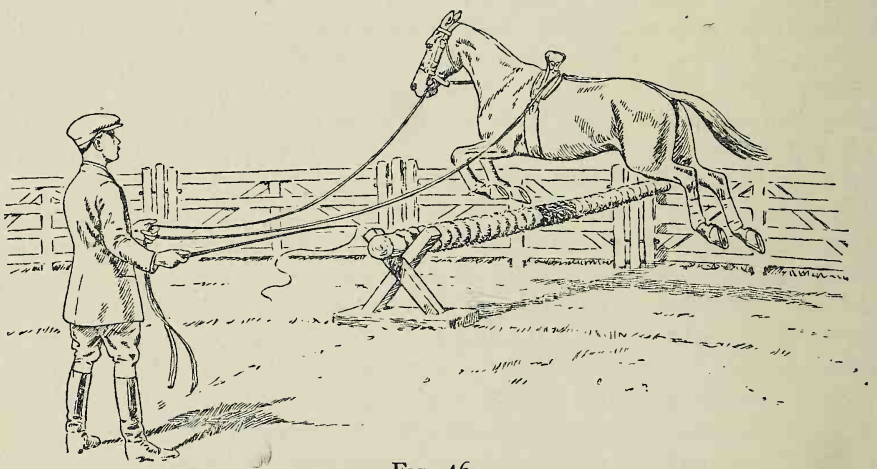


Fig. 46.

Over this bar the horse should be driven in the long reins, but without the bearing-rein.

it should not be possible to knock them down. A heavy pole is best, and it should have rounded, smooth surfaces which will not injure the horse, and, as a further precaution, it can be wrapped with straw bands. Over this the horse should be driven in the long rein, *without the bearing-rein*, the horse still on the circle, with the breaker in the centre (Fig. 46). One (and later two) bars can be put up in the driving enclosure and across the circular track, and as the horse gains skill and confidence they can be gradually raised up to two feet six inches.

As the next step I advocate a system much in vogue in Ireland. The only drawback is that it necessitates great activity and energy on the part of the breaker. A lunge-rein is buckled on to the nose-band of a cavesson bridle, and the breaker, with a salver of oats in his hand, proceeds to lead the pupil about the country. Selecting a suitable fence, he climbs over,

leaving the horse behind and taking the lunge-rein and oats with him. If he has begun on the flat and has got the horse used to being drawn forward towards him by the lunge-rein (rewarding him each time with a caress and a nibble at the oats), he should have no difficulty in making his pupil jump to obtain a similar reward (Fig. 47). It should not be necessary to mention that the obstacles should be very small and simple to begin with, and later they can be selected as far as possible to be representative of the type of jump likely to be met out hunting. A horse will quickly learn to jump in good style, and, if thus progressively taught, the aid of an assistant with a whip should seldom be necessary. As soon as the horse jumps freely and without stopping first to look

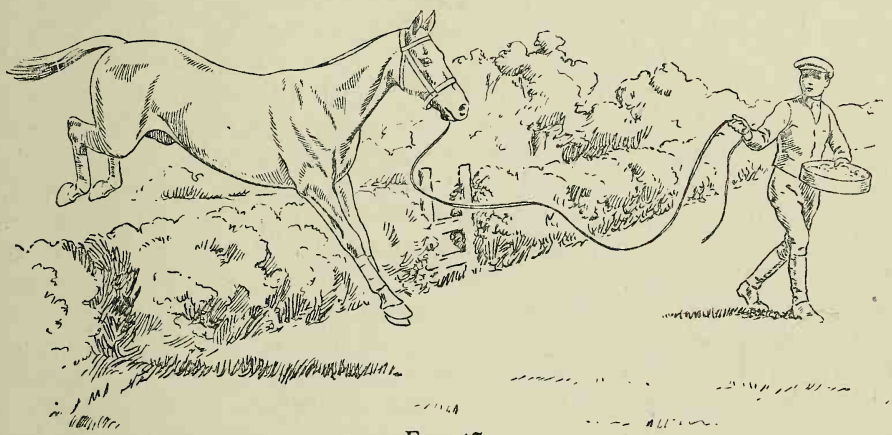


FIG. 47.

There should be no difficulty in making the pupil jump to obtain the reward of a nibble of oats.

apprehensively, he should be mounted and again taken into the driving enclosure.

Amidst all the controversy that surrounds riding and breaking, there is one point on which all authorities agree, and that is that a horse should be ridden over jumps with a slack rein. Any interference with his mouth when he is in the act of jumping will cramp his style, possibly not at that particular fence or the next, but he will quickly develop some trick or fault in anticipation of this interference. The breaker must therefore sit so securely in the saddle, and his seat must be so balanced, that he will be quite certain not to put pressure on the reins from the moment the horse is taking off at his jump until he has landed. The safest bit to use when jumping is the snaffle; the risk of serious consequence by interference with the horse's mouth is reduced to a minimum with this mild bit. Even when a double bridle is used the

curb-rein should be let out till it hangs quite loose as the horse jumps. But if a hunter has been taught the direct flexion and obedience to the aids generally there is usually no difficulty in holding, steadying, and stopping him in a snaffle bridle and ring martingale (see "Bits and Bitting").

The first mounted lessons in jumping should be in the driving enclosure, and they need not be prolonged, but before they finish the horse should be capable of cantering quietly round the ring, taking the jumps neatly in his stride, and two feet six inches is high enough. The horse should be circled to either hand so that he is practised in jumping while leading either with the off and the near legs. The breaker should then ride the horse over the same jumps over which he has been led with the lunge-rein, beginning, of course, with the smallest and progressing as before. If the horse should show undue reluctance to jump when mounted, it is best to dismount, buckle the long rein to the nose-band, and go back to the previous stage of leading him over the jumps and rewarding him after each jump. However, if this part of the breaking has also been progressive and successful, it should seldom be necessary to have to return to any previous stage.

It is a mistake to face the young horse at anything but fairly easy jumps in cold blood; it is best to take him out hunting as soon as he has learned to jump a variety of easy fences, for even brilliant performers in the hunting-field are so often reluctant jumpers in cold blood, and fine jumpers in cold blood, such as show jumpers, are so often hot with hounds. We can never reproduce the conditions of a hunt on the schooling-ground; there is no field, no pink coats, no hounds, no horn, and no fox, so we gain nothing by this schooling beyond showing a horse that he has to jump in order to get to the other side of an obstacle. So when he has been got fit, been taught the direct flexion, obedience to the aids, and to jump a small place in balanced form, he should learn the rest with hounds. Besides, a whole season would be lost if we went in for the elaborate course sometimes advocated, for the summer is certainly not a suitable season for jumping. Even if the ground is not too hard, natural fences are too leafy and blind to be possible, and made fences serve no purpose and give a wrong impression to a horse intended for a hunter.

I will describe two methods adopted by prominent breakers and dealers to improve the jumping of their horses. They are well-thought-out contrivances for keeping a horse in jumping practice and for improving his form for a show in a paddock.

A large oval school is enclosed in eight feet high strong paling. The horse inside can neither see over nor through. At intervals round this are a variety of very strong, firmly fixed jumps. They can be raised or

lowered, but there is no give about them, and if a horse strikes them he comes down. The horse is chivied round and round by a man standing in the centre with a whip, and the jumps can be raised if desired and moved farther from the ditch, which forms part of one of the jumps.

The other contrivance is more elaborate and consists of a straight lane about one hundred and fifty yards long (Fig. 48). There are high, unjumpable walls, and along the outside the walls are raised

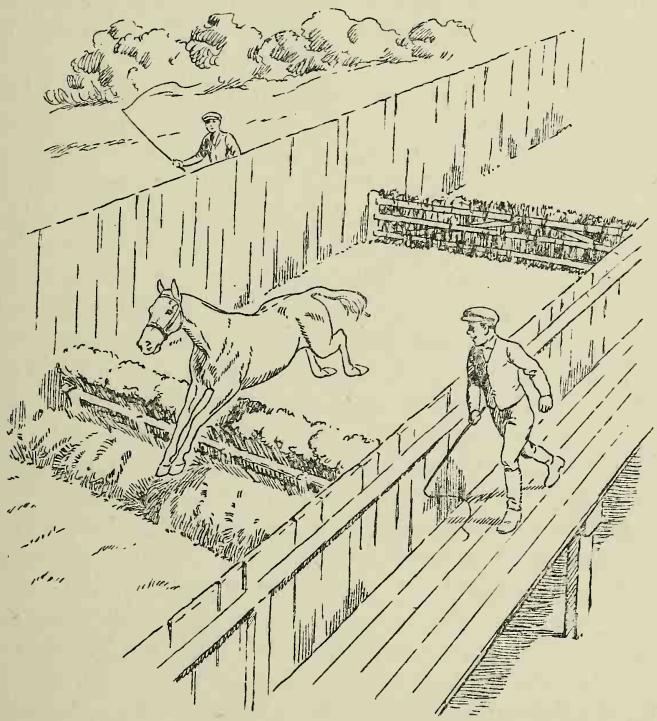


Fig. 48.

The jumping lane. The pupil is sent down, encouraged by men on the raised platforms.

platforms, along which a man can run and reach over the high paling to use a whip on the horse inside. Across the lane at intervals is a series of firmly fixed jumps, timber, a gate, hedge and ditch, ditch and hedge, and a stone wall. These jumps are very formidable, the edges of the ditches being solid rounded concrete. One end is blocked by a high paling, and at the other is a loose-box, in which there lives a cob, a fine free jumper, who knows what is required of him. The pupil is brought

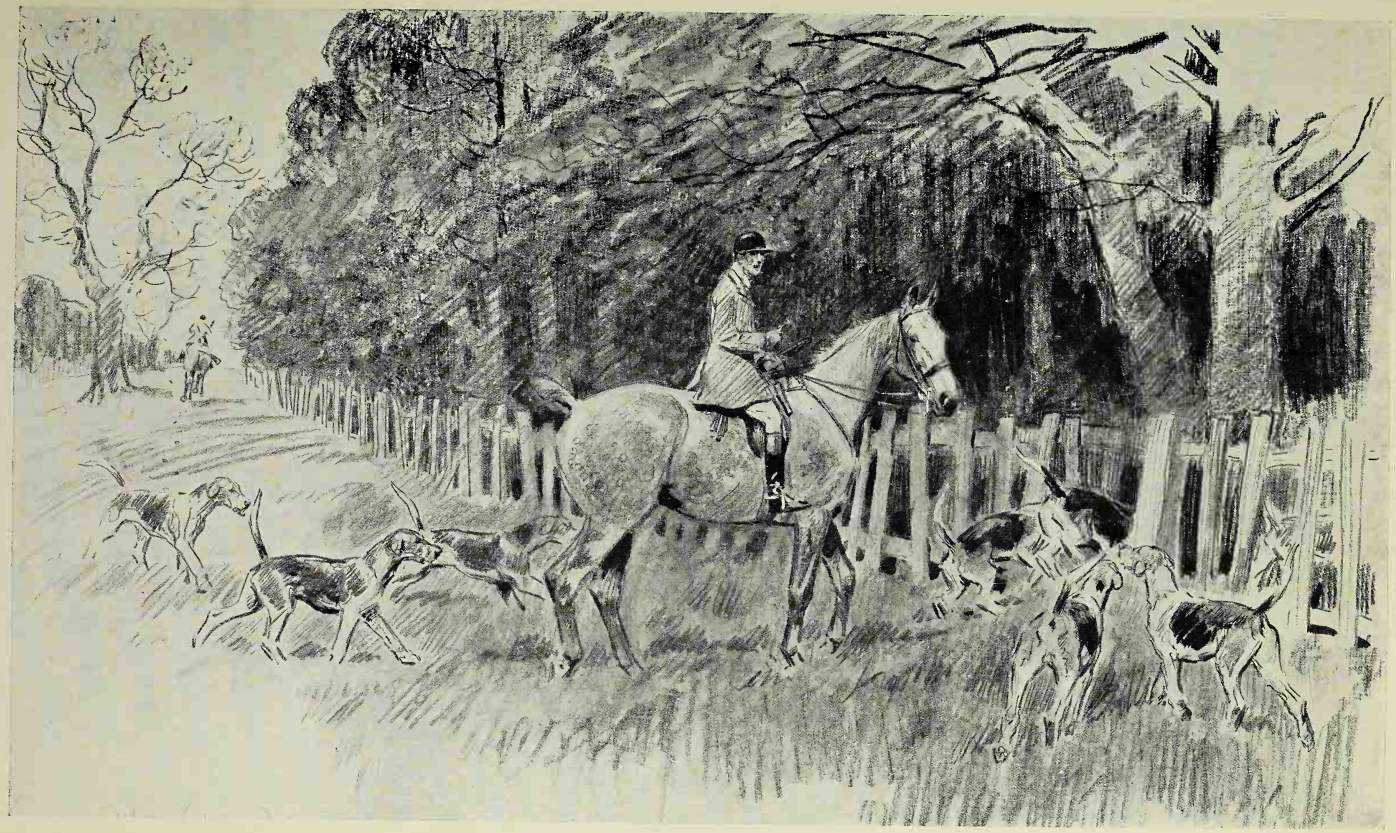
in at the loose-box end and the jumping cob released. The old hand canters down the course, and the youngster is sent off after him, encouraged by men on the raised platform. At the far end both are turned and driven back. I am told that the pupil soon gets as keen on getting down the course and back as his mentor; in fact, sometimes outstrips him.

Both the schools described above must be very useful to a dealer who has a number of horses to cope with, but has not the skilled labour available. Further, he has to be ready to give a show in his paddock at all times, and he must contrive some means of making his horses reliable jumpers.*

It is not wise to risk refusals and consequent battles by larking over fences with no hounds, but I have, however, found success with the following practice: In the course of an exercising round, over which our hunters are taken regularly, and leading towards home, is a lane with a sequence of gates. When the crops are off the fields, instead of taking them through the gates, we jump the simple fences (hedge and ditch and ditch and hedge). The fact that the horses know they are being taken towards home stimulates them and makes them keen. We are careful not to jump them every time they are taken over this route, as this would make them restless whenever they approach the first hedge, and in time they would have a tendency to become hot.

It is in these early lessons in jumping that the gregarious instinct of the horse can be made use of. If we have available an experienced horse, a willing, sure jumper who will give our youngster a lead, it may save time and obviate the necessity of resorting to whip or spur, but it is best to dispense with a lead as early as possible so that a horse does not get to depend on one. A horse's imitative faculty is greater than is usually supposed, and a young horse with an expert example to copy will not only follow very readily, but will take the jump in very much the same style as his leader. But when a horse has started hunting, his schooling outside the hunting-field should stop, except as regards occasional work in the long reins, which is so good for all horses and a most useful change from the monotonous trail along the high road, for unless a groom is a very good and energetic rider with expert knowledge of how to use his legs and hands, a horse's mouth and carriage deteriorate at exercise. Long-rein driving is the best means of preventing this and of restoring mouth and carriage impaired by slovenly or inexpert riding. It is easier to teach a groom the correct method of long-rein driving than to make an awkward or lazy rider into a good one, and there is therefore less risk of having one's horses spoilt.

* The jumping lane described is, of course, a very costly affair, but the oval school is often used even where there is only a small stud to be dealt with.



HE MUST BE TRAINED TO STAND QUIETLY AT COVERT-SIDE.

First Appearance with Hounds

As soon as your embryo hunter has been given a notion of jumping and is fit enough, he should be taken out hunting or cub-hunting, and here it is well to emphasise the best way of making his early appearances with hounds successful and profitable. The first day we should be content with simply riding him to the meet, and it is important to be there early; in fact, one of the first. Withdraw into a side lane or field, clear of the pack. Let him watch the arrival of the other horses, the motor-cars, and the hounds, and when the hunt moves off to the first covert send him home. However placidly he may stand, it is best to be content with this short first appearance; a wave of excitement may come over him if he is allowed to go on with the field; in fact, a young horse's interest often increases as the morning passes, till he becomes excited and difficult; often, indeed, the second day out he is quite likely to be more excited than on the first.

It is very important at this stage, firstly, to get him out with hounds often; secondly, to get him hard and fit; thirdly, to avoid, through fatigue or some temporary unsoundness, an interruption in his lessons; and fourthly, to be able to give him good feeds of oats without his getting overfresh. All these objects are attained by *frequent* days, never long enough to bring on fatigue, but regular enough to familiarise him with all the exciting incidents of a day's hunting. The second day we might move off to the first covert, well in rear of the field, where there is no chance of his being dangerous or a nuisance. The third day he might stand at covert side while the hounds draw and possibly find. A day spent with the second horses is also valuable. This way he could be given three days a week, if the meets were not far away, and the progressive experience thus gained in a month is far greater than if we had given him a tiring day once a week for three months. There is not time in the short intervals for him to forget what he has learned, he will be getting fitter, his legs will be getting hard, and he will become used to the unaccustomed sights and sounds, and it is also important to bear in mind the time thus saved. Here again it will not be out of place to emphasise the fundamental principles of horse-breaking—viz., it is the frequency of the lessons that tells, and not their duration that is effective. Three lessons of ten minutes each during early breaking will impress a horse far more than one lesson of two hours, and three quite short days a week with hounds are far more useful than one long one.

I wonder how many horses contract bad habits during these early days? The vice of kicking, through being brought into unfamiliar

surroundings while too fresh, inexperienced, and suspicious; pulling, through being allowed to gallop in a hunt before being prepared by progressive stages for such an exciting adventure; restlessness at covert side, because their minds have not been settled by enforced restraint and regular exercise—all these are traceable to lack of method.

The breaker must judge for himself the rate of progress he can make, and it will vary with every horse. On the one hand, he will not wish to waste time; and, on the other, he must not risk spoiling the breaking by undue haste; but I am convinced, not only from my own observation, but from that of others who have had wider opportunities than I have, that extreme care in giving a horse his early experience with hounds, if not the secret of success, goes very far towards producing a hunter with the right temperament; and the effects of these early lessons are of lifelong duration, just as a step missed, with the erroneous idea of hurrying matters, may permanently and adversely affect a horse's manners.

Refusing

"Refusing" is a subject that requires careful consideration. It is difficult, often impossible, to tell why a horse refuses. He may do so for any of the following reasons: Pain anywhere is often the cause. Infirm fore legs or feet may make landing painful. Infirm hocks may cause a horse to distrust taking off. Too severe a bit, a heavy hand, interference with the reins at the critical moment (the result of an insecure seat) may make a horse afraid to jump, anticipating the jerk at his mouth that is in store for him. We cannot blame the horse for any of the above. Sometimes they see other horses jumping what appears to them an easier place, and try to swerve away in that direction; sometimes they are attracted to a gate on their right or left. Some are downright cowards, afraid to jump any place unless they see another horse take it first in safety. Some hunters are so interested in watching hounds that a fence will often take them by surprise, and they will curl up and stop. If the place is not big, they may then jump from a stand in a very disconcerting and unseating manner; but it is best to take them back a length or so and attack the obstacle a second time. Sometimes a free and reliable jumper will refuse unaccountably, and, when taken back and put at the place again, jump freely and in perfect style. They give one the impression that they are out of their stride, leading wrong, or that they have misjudged the whole situation. This cannot be called refusing, and we can consider whether it is not more tactful to assume that the horse has its own good reasons for not caring to jump at that particular place; and if the fence is practicable a little distance away, we can jump him there instead. This is often less

THIS FORM OF REFUSAL TENDS TO MAKE ONE UNPOPULAR.

discouraging to a young horse than forcing him over a place he does not like the look of.

Lastly, there is the exasperating brute that will jump a big or even an intricate place in perfect style, and occasionally, when approaching the simplest obstacle with his head up and full of go, give you the impression up to the last second that he is going to have it, and then stop dead.

There is no doubt that fear and the instinct of self-preservation play a large part, not only in good jumping, but also in refusing. Horses are more likely to refuse at a ditch that is very deep and formidable-looking than at one, although much wider, where they are unlikely to hurt themselves in case of a fall. Others are inclined to jump such places with extra safety. A horse is more likely to rap timber or even crash through it if it looks rotten, and especially if the rails are nailed on the far side, whereas he may refuse altogether if the timber looks new and formidable, or, if he jumps, it is possible he will be extra careful to make no mistake. I have known a horse that had once been caught in wire refuse to walk through a gap, and I have known the same horse jump a gap. The instinct of self-preservation plays its part in all these cases. I have seen another, galloping riderless after hounds, have his wits about him enough to jump a single strand of wire stretched four feet across a gateway. It is not uncommon for young polo ponies to jump the goal-line and the whitewash cross that marks the centre of the ground; and a horse of mine once jumped a partridge. I have known a hunter, a brilliant timber jumper, turn a somersault over a fixed pole two feet high, over which her owner tried to lunge her, and, moreover, she did it *twice*. How many more times she would have fallen I cannot say, for the pole had broken in the second attempt, and the mare was not asked to try again till she went out hunting, when she performed in her usual brilliant style. It will, therefore, be seen that refusing, as well as keenness in jumping, are unaccountable vagaries, and that the reasons for the former are so varied and many that it is almost impossible to particularise, and we must be content with generalities.

If we are dealing with a refuser, we must begin by trying to determine the reason for his refusing. Pain, unsoundness, ill-health, want of condition can be dealt with, and the horse should not be asked to jump again until the adverse circumstances are eliminated. If the breaker's seat is firm and well balanced, and, therefore, independent of the reins, a bit severe enough to hold and steady the horse with ease can be used; but if he is not sure of himself he had better use a snaffle and ring martingale, although there is little hope of his teaching a horse to jump if he is not quite certain of avoiding unintentional indications with hand and leg.

The form of refusal in which a horse swerves to either side is the most dangerous of all. If he stops dead, the worst that can happen is that he shoots his rider over his head; but if he turns and gallops down the fence side he may cross other riders, balk them, and make their horses refuse, and there is great danger of a collision and an accident. It is a form of refusal which makes one unpopular in the hunting-field and is a menace to safety. But by good breaking and riding we can deal with it. Not so easy is the form in which a horse, in spite of whip and spur, dies down to a complete stop in front of a fence (see Chapter XII.).

Riding at a Fence

I will begin by emphasising the fact that the only help a rider can give his mount at a jump is to stimulate his energy by use of his legs or heels or spurs or whip, and, as he approaches, to restrain him and balance him by leg, reins, and bit. He can loosen the curb-reins, and he further can avoid hampering him by leaving his head absolutely alone from the moment he is taking off until he has landed with all his four feet and is preparing to gallop on. The can avoid any incorrect or unintentional indication by leg or hand as he approaches a jump and as he takes hold of his horse again after landing. He can avoid shifting his weight in such a way as to cause his horse any undue exertion or strain, and he can so alter his poise and balance as to lighten the burden on taking off and landing, and so as not to impede a floundering or stumbling horse. But that is all. The rider cannot "hold up" a stumbling horse; he cannot "lift him" at his fences any more than a man can raise himself by pulling at a rope fastened under his feet.*

On approaching a fence, if the rider has had his weight on his knees and in the stirrups, and has been leaning forward to ease himself and his horse, he must change his balance and sit well down in the saddle (Fig. 49). He must then take a pull, and at the same time exert an even leg pressure, and have his hands well forward, held low one at each side of the withers. This will cause him to round his back slightly (Fig. 50). If the hands are *kept* low—one at each side of the wither, and the knees slightly bent (and not stiff) for the whole of the leap—the rider will seldom be thrown, no matter how awkwardly the horse may jump.

* I very much doubt whether a man can indicate to his horse where he should take off for a leap, and I doubt still more whether anything would be gained if he could. It is best to leave it to the horse and trust to his instinct of self-preservation. It is true that some of the *haute école* riders at Saumur and other continental schools can so train a horse that he jumps on indications and without any obstacle for him to jump over, but of course there is a wide difference between school riding and riding cross-country.

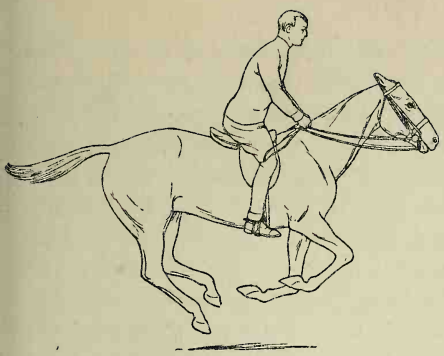


FIG. 49.
The gallop.

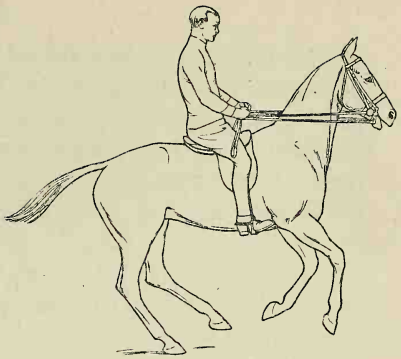


FIG. 50.
Collecting.

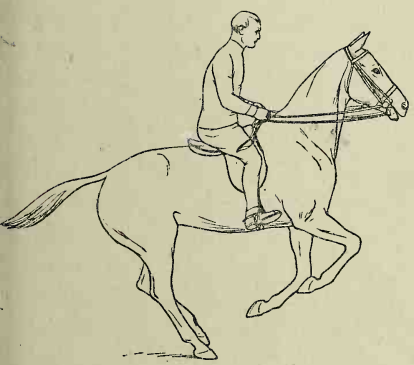


FIG. 51.
Taking off.

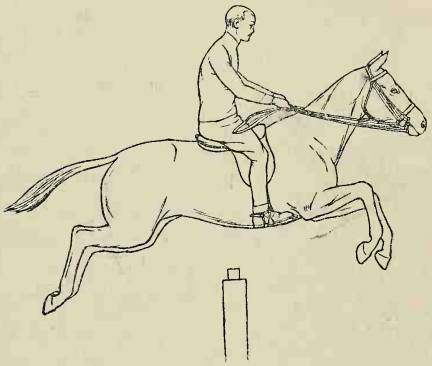


FIG. 52.
The leap.

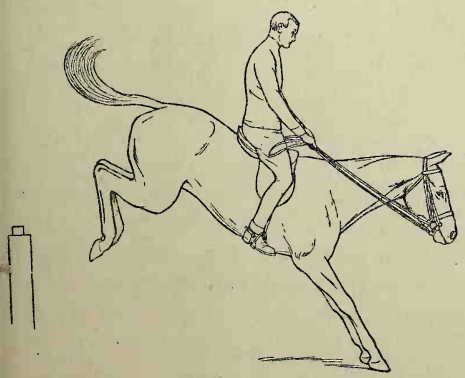


FIG. 53.
Landing.

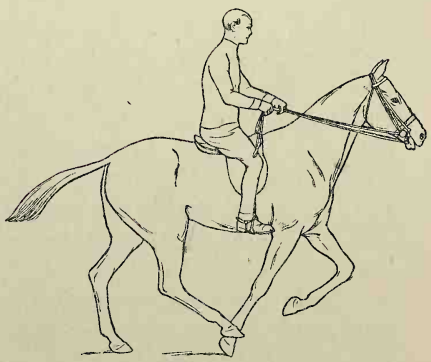


FIG. 54.
Preparing to gallop on.

If the horse has been put through the preliminary breaking, this pull and leg pressure will have the effect of slightly checking his pace, raising his head and neck, and forcing his hind legs well under the centre of gravity; in other words, obtaining the direct flexion. The horse will then be in a position to take the few collected strides preparatory to taking off, which are equivalent to the "run" a man finds necessary in jumping. It also attracts the horse's attention to the obstacle ahead, and balancing him, puts him into the best position to apply his energies to the leap. Experienced horses may learn to do this of their own accord, but it is best not to trust them. We should, without exception, always give a horse this indication and preparation; and the distance in front of the fence for this to be done must vary according to the speed at which we are galloping, and the freshness or tiredness of the horse must also be taken into consideration. Let us put down the distance as from ten to thirty yards, but if a horse is going fast or is becoming tired we should be wise to commence soon enough, as we might find him going on his fore-hand or that his mouth had lost some of its sensitiveness. In this case it might well take the rider an extra length or two to get his mount into the balanced position described above. We should then approach the fence still sitting well down in the saddle, both hands on the reins, the curb-rein loose, an even feel by means of the snaffle on either side of the mouth, and the horse well enclosed between the legs. We shall thus be in a position to use all the aids to drive the horse forward and to prevent him from swerving or rushing. At the moment of taking off, the hands must be thrust forward so that all pressure is taken off the mouth, but the legs should continue the pressure to insure the horse having his hind legs well under him. I once saw an excellent illustration of the effectiveness of this, and saw this slackening of the reins carried out to perfection. When Dollery rode Cloister to victory in the Grand National, I was at the canal turn, and saw him over four fences. At each of these his jockey had the slack of the reins in his right hand, and at each fence he slackened the grip of his left hand and thrust his right fist into the hollow of his left palm, drawing it back as the horse landed. I have never seen the Grand National won in better style. Cloister took the lead at the second fence, and thereafter led both times round, and won by a distance. I believe he never faltered once. With a well-tried hunter over an easy fence where the take-off and landing are known to be good (such as one meets in a stone wall country), the rider can, if he likes, remain in the position of Fig. 49 and land in the forward seat (Fig. 55). But it is important to bear in mind that it is not possible to lean back from this position to save himself or to ease a horse's fore-hand if he stumbles, whereas from the position

in Fig. 53 he will not find it difficult to lean forward to ease his horse's hindquarters if there is a risk of them dropping into a ditch.

The whip can be used after the horse has been steadied, but there is difficulty and danger in using it then, as it necessitates taking one hand off the rein, and a horse may swerve as the whip is raised. Some breakers appear to be adepts at using the whip as the horse takes off. Care must be taken to time this with great accuracy, or the result will be more spectacular than effective. Correctly timed, it will have the effect of making a horse spread himself at a wide place; if too late, it will have no effect at all; just too soon, it may send him headlong

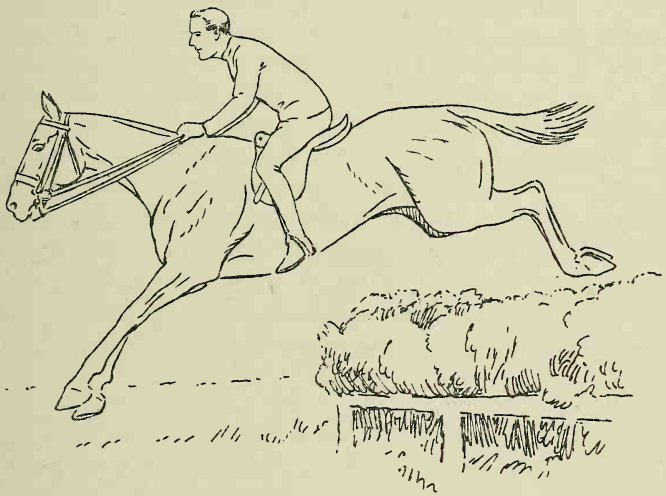


FIG. 55.

The forward seat.

into a fence and cause a fall. On the whole, I recommend a vigorous use of the legs, and only the whip with a horse more sensitive to it than to the heel.

It is a mistake to give a horse an extra long run, or to increase the speed unduly, because one is faced with a wide place. It is more important that the horse should go collectedly and that he should take off at the most favourable spot, studying the ground for this as well as for the landing; he is in a better position to do so if he is not urged too soon. If there is no hedge in front of the brook, we should take a pull somewhere within thirty yards of it, but near enough to be quite sure that the horse can see what there is to be negotiated, and then set him going fast. I quote from "Riding Recollections" by Whyte-

Melville: "One of the finest pieces of riding I ever witnessed was in a steeplechase at Melton as long ago as the year 1864, when, happening to stand near the brook, *eighteen feet of water*, I observed my friend Captain Coventry come down at it. Choosing sound ground and a clear place, for it was already beginning to fill with numerous competitors, he set his horse going, at about a hundred yards from the brink, in the most masterly manner, increasing the pace resolutely but gradually, so as not to flurry or cause the animal to change his leg, nearly to full speed before he took off. I could not have believed it possible to make a horse go so fast in so collected a form; but with the rider's strength in the saddle, and perfectly skilful hands, he accomplished the feat, and got well over, I need hardly say, in his stride." I agree with the above; but for hunters a hundred yards is far too great a distance, and I should put down thirty yards as a maximum; and further, the most important item in Whyte-Melville's instructions is the word "collected," for, unless the horse is going in collected form, the chances of a refusal or a blunder are greater with increased speed. If there is a hedge in front of the water, this will mark the place for the take-off, and the point in front of the fence where we collect him can, if we wish, be farther away. A plain ditch or small brook it is even best to take from a stand, especially with a beginner. A horse will then creep down to the extreme edge as far as he feels it safe, and then leap to the far side, picking a safe place for each foot.

A MÊLÉE.

CHAPTER X

THE POLO PONY

Conformation—its Relation to Temperament in the Polo Pony

WHEN we get to the point mentioned in Chapter VII., when ordinary riding ceases and the special training for the polo pony begins, we are faced with a new difficulty. Up to this point we have confined ourselves to exercises which can be performed by a horse of almost any size or conformation; we have now to embark on a series which will try the animal much more highly. We shall, as a matter of fact, only too often reach a point when we have to ask ourselves these questions: "Is the pony resisting because we are asking him to perform something for which he is unsuited by his conformation, or is it simply through impatience of control that he is putting up this defence?" In the first case we might just as well abandon the idea of making him into a polo pony; in the second case we must, of course, persevere. Suitable make and shape is of such importance in making the decision whether it is worth while or not to continue the schooling that the breaker must never lose sight of this point.

I will begin this chapter by considering the subject of conformation in detail, with the hope of assisting the student to answer the two questions propounded above.

It is an accepted theory in breeding that characteristics acquired during the life of the parent are not transmitted to the offspring. Yet in the outstanding example of the polo pony this theory is always meeting with apparent contradictions, which I propose to consider quite briefly as an introduction to this chapter.

Every breeder knows that the offspring of a mare that plays first-class polo is very easy to school. Ponies that are bred from such a dam by a small thoroughbred sire take to the game in an astonishingly short space of time. Their education proceeds with smoothness and ease and with pleasure to the breaker and apparently to the pony also. "Here," say the thoughtless, "we see the training acquired by the dam reproduced in the offspring," and at first sight this would appear to be the case. But if we approach the question from the biologist's point of view we have to look for other reasons.

The problem we have to solve is this, and the question is neither

new nor original: We breed from a young, unbroken mare and obtain a foal; the mare is then broken and taught polo, at which she excels. She is then once more put to the stud, and, by the same horse, breeds another foal. Will her later offspring be easier to teach polo than her first? The example of the entire racehorse illustrates the point better, as in this case we could widen our experience. Before trying him for racing he could go to the stud and serve a large number of mares. Then, after winning a series of races, he could again be put to the stud and serve the same mares. The question here is: Would the second batch of foals be more likely to be winners than the first? The large majority of biologists say "No," neither the mare's polo training nor the development of the stallion's racing powers can affect the offspring, and this we must accept. According to these scientists, although it is, in a measure, correct to say that the offspring *resembles* the parent, it is incorrect to say that the offspring "takes after" the parent.

We have, rather, to follow the line of Euclid's first axiom, and say that the progeny "resembles" the parent because they "take after" the same common ancestor.

We will assume soundness in the dam, for although we might have a good player that was unsound—independent of some crippling accident—she would not be an animal that would find her way to the stud. Soundness—*i.e.*, the absence of those ailments that have proved themselves hereditary—may therefore be assumed in sire and dam.

We must once more turn to the biologist (and here he is backed up by practical experience) and accept his dictum that *like tends to breed like*, the offspring as well as the parents resembling the common ancestors, maternal or paternal, in some proportion or other. *But nothing that is acquired by the sire and dam during their lifetime has any representative effect on the offspring.*

"It will be seen that, if such characteristics are ever inherited, then we must assume some very intimate sort of connection between various parts of the body on the one hand, and the reproductive organs on the other—some such connection as Darwin assumed in his Pangenesis theory." "Finally, we have the difficulty of conceiving any mechanism which would bring about the inheritance of modifications" ("Heredity," by J. A. S. Watson, B.Sc., F.R.S.E.). It is now, therefore, universally accepted that the development of any particular organ or set of muscles in the parents, and during their lifetime, will produce in the offspring no corresponding modification. We have only to reduce the Darwinian theory of Pangenesis to the absurd by instancing mutilations and amputations in the parents.

All this is quite clear to anyone with an elementary knowledge of heredity, and need not be enlarged on here.

We must therefore look for other reasons to account for the ease with which the offspring of a playing mare takes to its schooling.

Starting from the premises that like tends to produce like, we have a foal, resembling its mother in make and shape, modified in some proportion or another by the influence of the sire. Assuming that we mate a good playing mare with a small thoroughbred (to my mind the ideal mating), what the breeder *hopes* for is that in the proportions and angles of the skeleton, the foal will resemble the mother, while the muscles and their power of response—that is, the susceptible nervous system—will resemble that of the sire. Thus we should have an animal capable, when taught, of stopping and turning without undue exertion or strain like the dam, with the speed and stamina of the sire. It is to the transmitted *physical* characteristics we must look for the aptitude of the foal to follow in the footsteps of its parents, and we must hope that these characteristics will be distributed in the proportions mentioned above.

It is not necessary to go into the details of conformation—the student has only to refer to any book of the horse for this—but I should like specially to recommend "The Points of the Horse," by Hayes, as here will be found the most accurate and useful data. All I propose to deal with are the essential points that a pony should have if his training is to be attempted with any hope of success.

Let us therefore consider what must have been the physical characteristics of a mare that has played such good polo for a number of years that she should be considered good enough to breed from. First and foremost comes the length of neck and the way it and the head are set on. I approach this point with great reserve, as much depends on the early handling and breaking of the young animal. There is, however, no doubt that there are some necks that fall naturally and easily into the correct position, while there are others that require the most careful and delicate handling to prevent them from assuming a position which puts them at once out of the possibility of first-class polo, while there is a third kind which is hopeless from the start.

The neck need not be very long or slender; useful length in front of the saddle is got from a sloping shoulder rather than from a long neck. The top line of the neck should be long in proportion to the bottom line. The beautiful high carriage of the neck with hardly any bend till you get to the poll often manifests itself in a quite young pony (see two portraits, Figs. 56 and 57). Such a carriage is never lost except as a result of unskilled and brutal breaking. Anyway, this lofty carriage is a *sine qua non* for the high-class pony, and with it the direction of the pull of the rein from the hand to the bit is exactly right with relation to the bars and corners of the mouth. The weight can

be accurately distributed and varied with ease over the four legs, according to the manœuvre required of the pony.

Second, and almost equal in importance, is a sloping shoulder and a fairly prominent wither. The shoulder should, moreover, have great freedom of movement, which enables the pony to extend his fore legs at *all* his paces—walk, trot, canter, and gallop.

Next in order of importance are the hocks. Viewed from the side, they should not be straight, as in the racehorse; a certain bend (without being "sickle-hocked") is necessary to enable a pony when stopping to take the forward thrust as his hind feet meet the ground, without undue strain on the hocks. He will thus be able to stop smoothly and with ease to himself and his rider, and always to have the leading hind leg under the centre of gravity. A compensation for straight hocks would be very sloping quarters and an extra high carriage of the head and neck. Viewed from behind, there should be no outward bow. The hocks should at least be straight; preferably they should, without being cow-hocks, be slightly turned in rather than out. In the latter case this conformation also gives freedom to the stifle joints in galloping, and the juxtaposition of the big muscles inside the buttocks act, as it were, like cushions and will further obviate the strain to which an outward bow would render the hocks liable.

The pasterns should not be too sloping or too long, for although a very sloping pastern means great comfort to the rider and reduced concussion to the pony's limbs, it throws an increased strain on the tendons and is inclined to make a pony a slow starter.

The loins should be broad and muscular, as otherwise they would soon tire, and the pony, in trying to save himself the consequent pain of fatigue, will throw undue strain on other parts, usually on his fore-end.

Depth through the body (heart-room) is of great importance. The respiratory organs are situated here, and roominess in this region indicates endurance and staying-power.

Added to the above the mare should have been fast and sound, which argues that she must have had good straight action in all her paces.

It is said that ponies play polo in all shapes, but the above points are absolutely essential to a good polo pony. However attractive a young pony may be in other respects, nothing will now induce me to buy it if it has not all the above points, although I might be inclined to overlook defects in other directions.

Let us now consider how the possession of the above points, or rather the lack of them, affects the pony's temperament and disposition. We will assume that his early handling has been rationally and successfully carried out. After the breaking proper has begun, any struggle

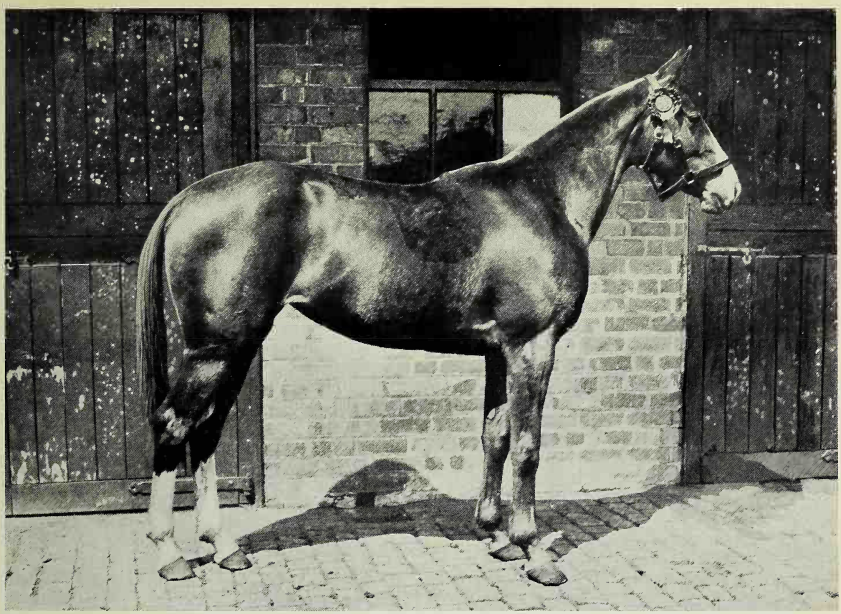


Fig. 56.—A well-developed pony, photographed when just four years old. A winner of many prizes. Her symmetrical conformation and straight action enabled her to stand a season's hunting when three to four years old.

Fig. 57.—Winner of two firsts at the National Pony Society's London Show, after a season's polo, when just five years old. Her suitable conformation enabled her to play fast polo as a four-year-old without injury. She played in both the International Matches, 1927.

Two examples of polo-bred ponies to illustrate points of conformation. Note the set-on of head and neck, sloping shoulder, angle of hock and pastern, strong loin, and ample heart room.

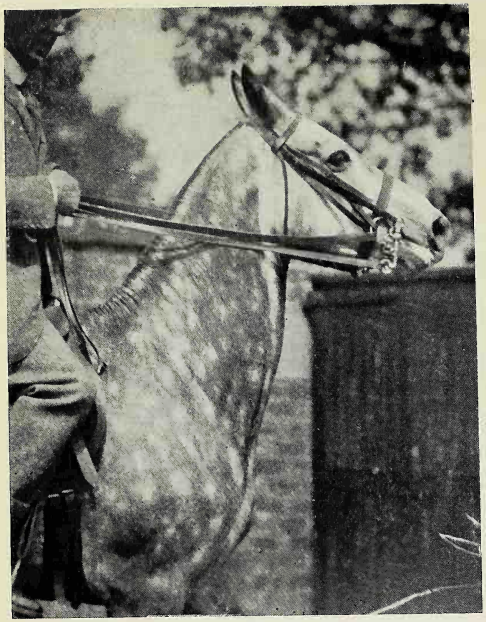


FIG. 58.—The head pulled up by the snaffle to a position almost "star-gazing."

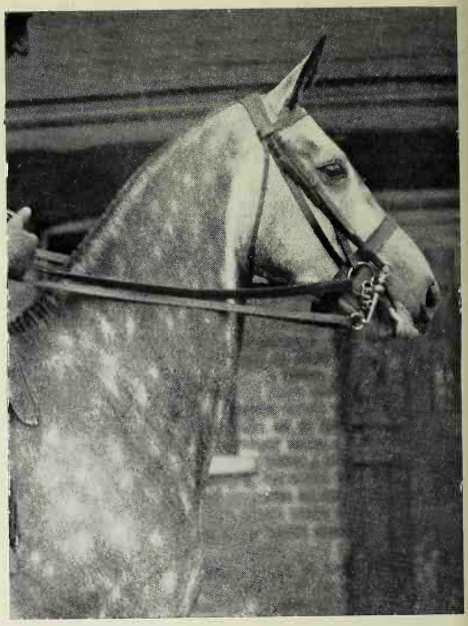


FIG. 59.—A second later. The pony, forced forward by leg pressure, has been induced to bend his neck at the poll by play on the curb reins—jaw contracted.

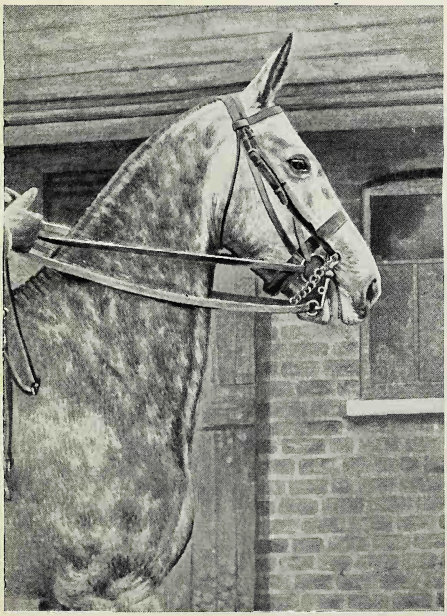


FIG. 60.—A second later. The direct flexion complete—jaw relaxed.

FIG. 61.—The neck overbent and the bend too far back—a bad fault. In this case the result of poor riding, but oftener due to faulty conformation.

Illustrating the most important point of conformation—viz., the set-on of the head and neck, and its bearing on the correct and incorrect direct flexion.

for supremacy between pony and rider that does not end in victory for the latter is a point against successful breaking. In entering into this struggle the breaker has to remember that the horse is stronger than he is, and that from off his back the rider's strength can only be exerted towards inflicting pain. It resolves itself, therefore, into pitting intelligence and intellect against brute strength, and still more in using this intelligence to prevent the pony from realising that, owing to the disadvantageous position of the rider and its own greater weight and strength, there is really no need for it to obey. A correct course of breaking is a succession of steps, one leading to another, and each in its turn perfectly understood by the pony. Now, if in the course of this step-by-step reasoning (for reasoning is all that it is) we ask the pony to perform something for which he is, by his conformation, unsuited, or which for the same reason is particularly irksome or painful, there will be resistance, a refusal to obey, resulting in a struggle for supremacy, the outcome of which is always doubtful. The best we can hope for in this case is half-hearted obedience or a conditional surrender, with the probability of a renewal of the resistance and the struggle in the next lesson, and usually with increased vehemence.

The breaking never passes this step satisfactorily if the resistance is due to the pony being asked to perform some exercise for which he is unsuited by reason of faulty conformation. He begins to dread his lessons, then to hate them, and becomes first soured and then vicious. The fault in his conformation may not have been noticed when breaking started, but it was there all the same, and examination after such a failure will usually reveal the fault, which a keener observer and a more experienced judge would probably have noticed before. There are men who are said to have "a good eye for a pony," and they are the men who are capable of avoiding buying ponies with those faults of conformation which militate against successful breaking and which are apt to produce unsoundness.

The saddle horse, capable of carrying weight with comfort to himself and rider, safely and swiftly, without undue fatigue and with docility, is the outcome of generations of artificial selection. The make, shape, and general appearance of such an animal has stamped itself on the minds of horsemen and breeders, with the result that such mares and horses as do not answer this description, or whose progeny or ancestry do not, are eliminated from the stud. If, therefore, we inadvertently buy a pony which in the course of breaking resists unduly, and persistently puts up a fight against some particular exercise, the breaker has to ask himself the question propounded at the beginning of this chapter—viz., Is this particular resistance due to faulty conformation?—and if the answer is "Yes" he must consider whether it is not wiser to give up the idea of schooling his pony for polo, but instead to relegate

him to some other walk in life. If he persists in the breaking, the result will probably be, as stated before, a soured or vicious pony.

The breaker will find that the usual point at which he fails is making the pony, when going fast, pull up suddenly, smoothly, kindly, *and often*, and the method of resistance is shaking the head, plunging, or, more often, putting the head and neck in such a position as to make the bit ineffective by altering the direction of the pull of the reins. The result of this last is that the bit bears on the corners of the mouth and not on the bars. These methods of resistance are usually called faults of mouth, but the seat of the trouble is really somewhere else, probably in the hocks or loins, or in the set on of the head and neck. Another fault is leaning on the rider's hand as the pony tires. This is usually caused by the pony relieving the strain on weak loins, by extending his neck and lowering his head. The result is too much weight on the fore-hand, and therefore "propping" with the fore legs. This not only jolts the rider, but puts the pony's legs in such a position that he cannot jump off quickly, and if he turns he has to do so on his fore-hand.

The third fault is slow starting, a common reason for which is pasterns too long and sloping. The pony has to raise himself into a galloping position, and this involves loss of time and undue muscular effort.

In trying to overcome the first two, violent use of the bit is resorted to, and in the last two cases a harsh use of the whip and spur. All of this must necessarily have a very discouraging effect on a willing pony that is probably doing his best, but is hampered by some physical disability. Pain and more pain is all that he gets for his efforts till his temper goes; a series of bitter struggles ensues, from which he emerges either victorious and vicious, or beaten, soured, and sullen.

All other faults contracted by the pony are usually the result of bad breaking and riding, or are due to untoward incidents in strenuous matches. Such faults can often be cured by reschooling, and if a pony's mouth has been bruised time must be given for it to recover, but if its sensitiveness is impaired, control is to some extent lost for good, and the pony's manners deteriorate in consequence.

Further Schooling for the Polo Pony

Having reached the point described at the end of Chapter VIII., we are ready to begin the special course of schooling for the polo pony.

We should now quicken up the pace. Still using the whole of the school, we should make the pony go at a fast canter down the long sides, steadying him at the corners, and make him do the changes of leg at the inclines and right-angle turns with equal precision at this increased pace.

Teaching a Pony to go with a Slack Rein

From the beginning the breaker must have in his mind that the best polo players prefer ponies that play with a slack rein, but some very good ponies never learn to play thus. Some of the more impetuous will only do so when going at full speed, and only the more temperate can be trained to do so at the canter. Further, many players are not good enough riders to play a pony with a slack rein, so we must keep an open mind and not expect or exact too much in this connection. It is, nevertheless, always important, not only during breaking, but also in the course of play, to exert as little pressure on the reins as is compatible with control.

The school is the best place in which to teach the rudiments of going with a slack rein, as the walls always face the pony and have the excellent effect of making him hold himself in readiness to stop. Even when we come to the quicker paces down the long side of the school we should never fail to ease the hand, and as we approach the end wall apply the aids for stopping, which should become lighter and lighter till the merest touch on the bit will suffice to obtain the direct flexion to pull him up short. It is helpful if we accompany this with the word "whoa," shouted clearly; this the pony will come to associate with stopping, and in time this word, called a second before applying the aids for pulling up, will act as a warning, and he will soon learn to gather himself together in anticipation of the actual stop, even in the middle of the school, where there is no wall to help. Calling "Whoa!" at the right time will greatly aid us in gradually lightening the pull on the reins.

Teaching a Pony to jump round on his Hocks

I will describe the turn to the right; for the turn to the left the aids are, of course, reversed. We should begin with a brisk passage to the right down the centre of the school. Both the direct and the lateral flexions should be rigidly maintained. As we approach the middle we increase the indication of the hands by carrying them well to the right, while exerting strong pressure with the left leg, till we get the pony to turn on its hind legs (Fig. 62). This is performed by his stepping round with his fore legs, keeping his hind part more or less stationary, but lifting up and putting down the hind feet alternately to form the pivot. The hind feet should describe a small circle, and the fore feet a large concentric circle, both to the same hand, and it is important to bear in mind that in this case we have the reverse of the turn on the fore-hand—viz., the larger the circles, the less will be the tendency for the pony to get behind the bit. We can then by degrees press the pony

forward with both legs until he will spring from the passage at the quick walk into a canter in order to do this turn. Later it must be performed from the straight forward walk.

When he has become proficient at this, we should try an elongated figure of eight down one of the long sides of the school. This is really the change of hand by means of the incline, using quarter of the width of the school. The pony should never be more than four yards from the long wall, and at each of the ends we should stop him and turn inwards towards the wall, and continue to turn until we are faced for the next incline (see "School Movements").

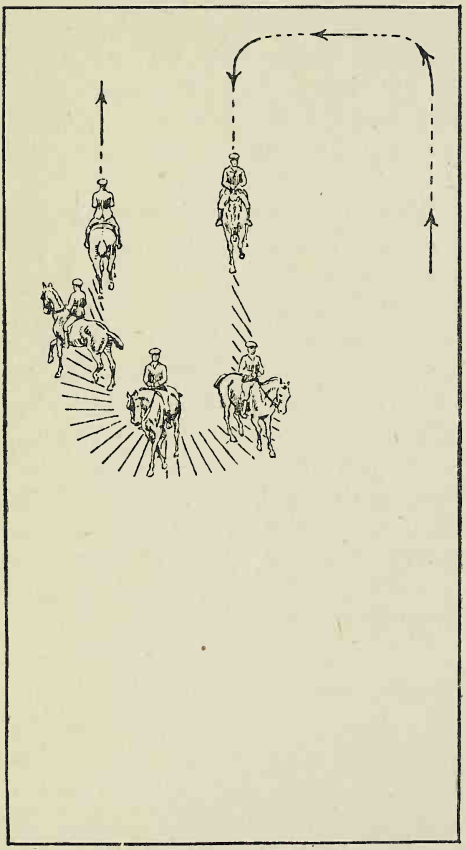


Fig. 62.

First lesson in the turn on the hind legs.

The Finish of the Pony's School Education

This can be done at a further increase of speed, and it is important that the direct and lateral flexions should be made for the turns at the end of the school, which should always be made from the halt. We should not allow the pony to turn at the gallop or to scamper round, but as we approach the end we should definitely pull him up and jump him round from the halt, and start off again at the gallop. When the pony has learnt to do this with speed and precision, we can do the same exercise, using the short end of the school (see "School Movements").

As both these exercises require great energy and exertion on the part of both rider and pony, too many turns should not be attempted at once, but the pauses for ease and rest and a pat on the neck should be frequent. The next step will be stops and turns performed in the middle of the school without the assistance of the wall, till the pony becomes so handy that we can turn and twist in all directions without ever taking him by surprise.

Further Schooling in the Open

When the pony has reached the point mentioned above, a rest from all riding is of advantage. He should be thrown out of work for about a fortnight or three weeks, during which time a dose of physic might be given. This pause will give time for his mouth to recover its freshness, and will give his legs a rest. If the weather is fine and warm, this rest can be taken in the paddock, and the grass feed can be supplemented with a daily ration of corn. When he is put into work again, a week in the long reins will restore his condition, and this, followed by a few days in the school for a recapitulation of the exercises at fast paces, will prepare him for work in the open.

If the preliminaries have been correctly carried out, there should be no need to take him back into the school after work in the open has once commenced. Only if he indicates that his preparation has been insufficient will it be necessary to go back to some of the earlier lessons.

For the next stage a level field, with a long hedge down one side at least, answers best. The first exercise is an elongated figure of eight (covering more ground than we did in the school) along this hedge (never more than four yards away from it), always turning inwards towards the hedge. At first we should stop and turn at the same place every time. It does not matter if he becomes routined; what we have to aim for is that the pony, in order to pull up, adopts the direct flexion, thrusts his hind legs well under him, and gives the rider that smooth and comfortable feel which is the sign that he has stopped correctly. If he knows exactly where the stop is going to be made, the pony will very soon come to prepare himself for it. Then when we have practised him at this, and he can do it with ease and smoothness, we can select a different place every time, and if at this stage the pony does not stop kindly, we can take him back to the previous step and stop him, and turn him a few more times at the places where he had become routined.

At the strict figure of eight close to the hedge we must stop* the pony, jump him round, and start off at full gallop in the new direction; but this should be constantly varied by taking the pony occasionally wide of the hedge, say twenty yards if we are going fast, and ten yards if we are cantering, and then galloping or cantering him round in a semicircle. This exercise should be further varied by stopping the pony as if for the jump round, and then, instead of turning, making him strike off at full gallop in the same direction. In order to carry out this work

* In these exercises it must be understood that "stopping" does not mean coming to a dead standstill; the pony should remain at the canter without gaining ground, see-sawing from fore to hind feet, ready for any movement.

with full vigour and at top speed, there must be frequent halts for both the pony and the rider to rest and recover their wind. It is important that such exercises should be done with precision and at the gallop, so that when a pony gets into the game, speed and stopping, both suddenly and often, will be no novelties to him.

At this point a whip in each hand is of assistance to the breaker. The pony may be sticky in jumping round in these turns close to the hedge, and perhaps slow in starting; the legs are fully occupied with the control of his hind part, and he may be clumsy or reluctant in getting round with his fore part. A tap down the outer shoulder will cure him, and with a whip in each hand we are ready to stimulate him for every turn to either hand. If we have only one whip, bringing it round from one side to the other is apt to take up his attention and cause him to anticipate.

An exercise that should also be practised is the canter to either hand in a diminishing circle. Strong leg pressure will be necessary to keep him at the canter, and stronger pressure with the outer leg to insure the pony tracking true. We must be guided by his capabilities and activity as to how small the circles should be and as to how gradually we proceed. A big, free-striding pony will find a very small circle irksome and tiring, so we must be lenient with him. The above exercise has a good effect in calming down an overfresh and excitable pony.

At this stage we can apply a test to determine whether we have made our pony sufficiently handy and obedient to the aids. It will also show whether our aids are sufficiently refined and defined. We should be able to make the pony gallop down a track not more than a yard and a half wide, changing his leg at every stride, or every other stride, or every so many strides, at will. By keeping him on this narrow track, where there is no room for him to swing or turn, he will be making his changes of leg entirely on indications by the aids, and not because we are changing direction.

Some breakers of polo ponies use the bending course to finish off their ponies. This is quite useful if the pony is never allowed to go wide of the posts, and if he is made to jump round on his hocks, and it is important not only to have races between ponies as to which can get down the course quickest, but that these trials should be alternated with tests as to which of two ponies can get down the course most slowly—of course, without breaking canter. This would prevent a pony becoming hot. If a pony shows a tendency to get excited on the course, it is best to turn occasionally round one of the posts other than the end one. (N.B.—The posts should be eight yards apart.) In both the above tests or exercises it is useful to have someone watching to tell us whether the pony has failed to change behind as well as in front.

It will now be necessary to have the assistance of one or more ponies, as the pupil will have to be taught to meet other ponies at full gallop. This is sometimes rather a nerve-racking experience for him, especially meeting two ponies and galloping in between them. He must also be taught to overtake other ponies temperately, and, without racing, to allow other ponies to overtake him.

Teaching a Pony to Ride Off

There is also riding off to be taught, and the early lessons in this are best given while hacking along the road. A man on an experienced pony is the best assistant (Fig. 63). Placing the old hand on the hedge side, we should try to make the young pony push him into the hedge.* At first we should give the pupil the advantage by allowing him to be slightly (a foot or so) in front. The old pony will not allow himself to be pushed into the hedge, and will try to shoulder his way out into the middle of the road again, but because of the advantage which we have given our pupil he may be able to keep him penned on the hedge side. If he does well, we must not persist too long, but the two should be drawn apart, made much of, and walked along side by side. From the walk we can gradually advance to the trot, and from the position of giving the young pony the advantage we can make him push on level terms. When the pony will do this temperately, we can try the ride off at the canter in a field, but we can, if we wish, leave riding off at this increased pace until we have got the pony into a game.

There should not be much difficulty in teaching a pony to ride off; the difficulty comes in making him continue to ride off after he has had one or two bumps in the course of the game. Some ponies, really enthusiastic at it, become discouraged by the first really hard bump. Players are sometimes very inconsiderate, and even when they know you are riding a "green" pony they will come in at a very steep angle and indulge in a very vigorous riding off bout. It is not always easy to avoid this, and until the pony has learnt how to hold his own he can be easily shaken or even knocked off his legs, because he will not have learnt how to brace himself in anticipation. Being severely ridden off is the chief danger of taking young ponies into a game of polo. I once owned a pony which was a great success and exceedingly staunch. She got a bad bump at an unfair angle in her third game. It fortunately never affected her at all except with the particular pony that had

* If we place the "green" pony on the hedge side, he is apt, if he finds himself in danger of being hemmed in, to stop and draw back to clear himself.

ridden her, and whenever they met after this, she was always reluctant to face him. Some ponies have a tendency to overdo riding off, and will not only push their opponent wide of the ball, but will continue, in spite of the player's efforts to get back on to the ball for his stroke.

As a final lesson we can, if we wish to be very thorough, have a few yards of boundary boards erected and practise the pony jumping

FIG. 63.

Early lesson in riding off.

over these and galloping along them. This is not a necessity, however, as during the spell of umpiring, which should precede taking every pony into the game, he can be familiarised with the boards.

Training to stick and ball is dealt with under the next heading, and the breaker must judge for himself at what stage this should begin. If he delays it too long the pony will be so handy that he will be very much more resourceful in shying off.

Schooling to Stick and Ball

The object aimed at here is, first of all, to convince the pony that the polo stick is not intended to hurt him or to urge him forward, and then to accustom him to move smoothly past the ball, and at such a distance from it as suits the rider's particular style of hitting. In common with other parts of breaking, it is difficult to say at what point in the pony's education it should begin. In some cases it is a useful relaxation from more strenuous schooling, and can be used to bridge over the time between two exacting lessons. On the whole, however, it is better, at first, that it should be a separate and distinct series of lessons, as it is a mistake to confuse a horse's mind by trying to teach him too many things at once.

This schooling to stick and ball can be very satisfactory, and it can, on the other hand, be very exasperating. Generally, however, I have found that much time need not be spent on it.

Early lessons should, of course, be at the walk, and should not begin until the pony answers to leg pressure and will move forward freely. It is helpful to begin by walking along a fence and by swinging the stick on the off side with the fence on the near side. With some very nervous ponies I recommend a country lane as the best place for the first lesson, especially if they have been used as hacks, because the habit of walking straight along a road will have been established. The presence of another pony (one already schooled) will tend to give the young one confidence. As we ride briskly along, the polo stick held short (or, better still, a polo stick sawn in two for convenience) should be shown to the pony. His neck should be rubbed with it, and he should be touched gently on the nose, side, and shoulder, while he is spoken to in a soothing tone. This is to convince him that, unlike the whip, it is not intended to hurt him, and to get him to realise the difference between the whip and the polo stick.

The most important point is to prevent the pony from slackening his pace as the stick is swung or as it swishes through the grass. If the pony is nervous at the stick, the first thing he will usually attempt is to move away from it, either by swinging his quarters out, more often by turning his head and shoulder away. If this is prevented by the presence of a fence and by judicious use of the aids, he may then either increase his pace (break into a trot) or try to stop. The breaker must be ready for the latter, pressing him forward with his legs. The tendency to stop is especially noticeable if the stick is swung backhanded. If the pony tends to quicken his pace at the swing of the stick, it is not so bad, but it must be counteracted by as gentle a feel on the reins as possible.

The breaker must be careful never to jerk the horse's mouth as he swings the stick, and the best way of avoiding this is to rest the knuckles of the left hand on the horse's neck just in front of the withers as the stick is swung for the stroke. This is, moreover, a useful step in accustoming the pony to go with a slack rein. It is important to bear in mind that, although a pony will forgive an accidental blow with a polo stick, pressure of the bit on his mouth as the ball is hit will quickly spoil him and make him adopt one of the various forms of ball shyness. Ponies are quick to realise the difference between a whip and a polo stick. One should always ride with a whip in the left hand, and the threat with it will always have its effect, even when the whirl of the stick all round his head and body leaves him unmoved.

As soon as he will stand the stick being swung and swished through the grass, we can have a try to hit the polo ball. Here our difficulty begins afresh and is, indeed, often greatly accentuated. The white polo ball and the click of the stick seem to arouse suspicion, and it may take considerable time and patience before a pony will allow it to be hit with equanimity. One can often get a pony used to the swing of the stick in a few minutes, but it sometimes takes a week or even longer to get the same animal to tolerate the ball being struck without an occasional convulsive start, and it may be that he will not lose this tendency until we get him into a game; there is then so much to take up his attention that the striking of the ball becomes a minor consideration.

One should begin, first, with the simple underhand forward stroke on the off side and sit very still, taking care not to twist the lower part of the body or to give *any indication with the aids other than for a forward movement*, unless the pony shows a tendency to shy off. One should go on with this gentle underhand tap until the pony allows the ball to be hit without taking any notice. We should then pat him on the neck, dismount, and let him stand, so that he may realise that he has done what we want.

Time is gained if, for the early lessons, we can let our pupil see the ball struck by an assistant on the back of a "made" pony. It is unwise to have two beginners at stick and ball in the field at the same time. A pony is just as likely to imitate the faults of a "green" pony as he is to gain confidence from a "made" pony.

It is a mistake to have more than one ball lying about; the pony should have his attention concentrated on the ball in use. It is not necessary to pull him up every time after a backhander nor after a miss, as there are always so many improving exercises we can perform in between hits. Some ponies will quickly realise what we want and will be amenable in the second or third lesson. Others, however, decide that it is incumbent upon them to thwart us, and will display the greatest

ingenuity to prevent the ball being struck. The breaker has here to pit his intelligence against the pony's, and be ready with all his aids to oppose his pupil's efforts, but in spite of all his skill and patience, he may fail. The pony will wait till the last second, when the reins have been slackened for the hit, and then move just wide of the ball or walk right over it. It is best on these occasions not to rate the animal or to do anything to show that you are annoyed, or you may give him the idea that he has defeated you, but just to walk on quietly, swinging the stick, and try again, when, being ready for him, you can apply the aids necessary to defeat him.

When the pony will allow you to hit the ball at the walk, taking a full swing forward on the off side and a backhander on the same side, we can try the forward and backhand shot on the near side. This should present no difficulty if the pony is first thoroughly accustomed to the off-side shots. He is used to the stick and to having the ball hit from his back, and that seems all there is to it. There is one thing one has to be careful about in these near-side shots; that is, in twisting the body, the legs must take no part in the movement. As the stick is taken back for the forward near-side shot, there is a tendency to press with the left leg and to curl the heel into the pony's belly, as there is also during the finish of the near-side backhander. Unless you are careful to avoid this, the pony will, having been taught to obey the leg, give a twist as you make this stroke, which will spoil the direction of your shot and constitute, in time, a "shy off."

So far I have only dealt with the straightforward shots on either hand and the two simple backhanders. Hitting the ball out and away from the pony, of course, presents no difficulty, but there are the other shots—the backhanders under the tail to both sides and also the shots to both sides under the neck. Provided the player will lean well back and out as he makes these two backhanders, I never find ponies pay much attention to them; but the shots under his neck, however carefully made, are very apt to make him nervous and apprehensive. They should never be practised outside the game, because a pony never really gets completely used to them except in a game. I advocate only making them in the heat of play, for then a pony is wound up and is not so likely to flinch. In Chapter IX. I advised that a hunter should not be jumped at anything big or difficult in cold blood, but that the time to do this is when hounds are running. It is the same with the polo pony, and the difficult, unpleasant shots should not be practised, as far as the pony is concerned, and should only be attempted when they are forced on us in the course of a game.

The rider must not manœuvre his pony into position for a difficult stroke. This was the old-fashioned way when the offside rule was in

force and polo was slower and more sticky generally than it is now. After watching the best players of all countries, I am sure that it is necessary to ride the pony straight at the ball from any angle, and be so expert and lithe that the ball can be struck in any direction with no risk of hitting the pony. There is a great tendency in this country amongst the older players who learnt their polo when the offside rule was in force, and younger players who have learnt their polo from them, to play much too slowly and to manœuvre their ponies into position for difficult angle shots; but I am convinced from observation that this teaches a pony to play too circumspectly and without sufficient dash. The important points are: quick starting straight into the gallop, smooth and temperate stopping, and instant deviation on to the new line of the ball in case it is deflected.

The breaker can then, if he likes, try the same shots at the canter, but if there is a game available there is no objection to allowing the pony to have his further experience with stick and ball in the course of a cantering chukker. It is, however, very useful to have passing and hitting practice, with one or more assistants on other ponies, for we must remember that complete breaking to stick and ball includes riding up to other players who are waving their sticks in the act of striking, meeting balls, and picking up balls travelling across the front. With a little ingenuity and imagination we can reconstruct almost every incident of the game in this stick and ball practice with at least one other player. These lessons should be divided into chukkers of, say, five minutes' duration, with a rest in between. Both the breaker and the pony can keep more alert than in a long lesson.

It is important that there should be no competition between the riders; on the contrary, they must cover and help each other just as often as they oppose each other, each riding back for the other's missed shots and backhanders.

It is a mistake to turn as the backhander is struck; well *after* the stroke is finished, either stop, get the pony's hocks under him, turn him on his hind legs and move back in his tracks, or move on without a pause. This should be done whether we are at the walk, trot, or canter.

Much depends on the temperament of the pony, and it is just as impossible to lay down definite rules for the duration of this part of the breaking as it is of any other. When I have had ponies at this stage early in the season, and commencement of play has had to be deferred because of the weather or soft ground, I have arranged miniature cantering games of one or two a side, which have been exceedingly useful. It should not take long to break a pony systematically and progressively to stick and ball, as recommended above—seldom more than a week or fortnight—and, moreover, if we can contrive to leave

their mouths alone when in the act of hitting, not only at practice, but in the course of a game, there is no reason why the pony should ever become ball shy, but on the contrary he should become truer as he gains experience of polo.

A polo pony should lead with the off legs for off-side play, and with the near legs for the play on the near side. There is a tendency for the pony to change legs as the shot is being made. Even if he does not shy off, this gives the impression that he is placing himself in a position to do so. This, to a certain extent, spoils the shot, and if possible a pony should be so trained that he stays on the correct legs as the polo stick is swung forward. This entails a far longer period of training to stick and ball than I have laid down, but it is doubtful whether it is worth while to allow it to delay his entry into the game. The fault will be eradicated with experience of polo in the course of time, although the tendency will always be there. It will be most noticeable as we make "sitting" shots (hitting out from behind and penalty shots at goal). A really well-timed shot is impossible unless the pony is leading correctly as the ball is struck. Sometimes we feel as we canter to the ball for one of these free hits that we shall not be able to time it to full advantage. At other times the pony puts us off by changing legs at the last second. To execute the best shot we must feel, as we start to canter at the ball, that we shall be able to time the shot exactly right, and this can only happen when the pony is leading correctly throughout.

The exercise for correcting the fault is to make the pony canter in a circle, leading correctly, and always to hit the ball out away from him—*i.e.*, to the right for off-side shots, to the left for near-side shots. This is not difficult on the off side, and is excellent practice for our near-side play. When changing direction after a deflected ball, it is important to make the pony turn in the new direction *immediately the ball is hit.* If instead he is swung round in the arc of a circle, the player loses possession and wastes time by not going the shortest way.

Some breakers, in dealing with a pony difficult to school to stick and ball, will hang up ten or fifteen sticks in his box, and place a like number of balls about on the floor. The sticks touch the pony constantly, and the balls are always before his eye. I have never found this of any use.

While the pony is still at the walking stage the breaker will find it useful to use an indoor polo ball (which is a miniature Association football), as this, being lighter and bigger than an ordinary polo ball, is not so liable to bury itself in the grass, neither does it travel so far, so that it is easier to find, and many more strokes can be made in the course of a short lesson. But later, when we increase the pace, we should use a polo ball, and it is important to get length on our shots. This

gives time and room to get the pony in hand again should he have rushed forward, to straighten him on to the line of the ball, and to do a few swings in the air to give him confidence again to go with the reins slack. Unless the breaker is fortunate enough to have at his disposal a very level field with short grass, he should take care to have all other circumstances as much in his favour as possible: a new ball, a sound stick, and a head that not only gives a good drive, but that can pick a ball out of a bad lie. For this purpose I have found nothing better than the "Ashley" head (Fig. 64), a combination of the ordinary cigar-shaped head in general use and the square head. This has both the above advantages, and in addition allows for a greater margin of error.

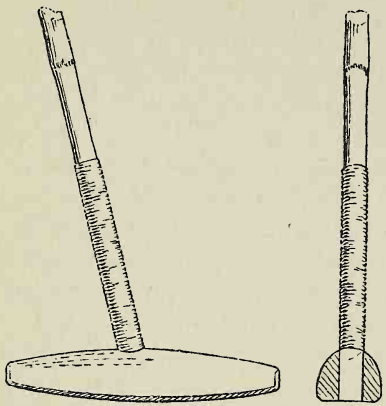


Fig. 64.

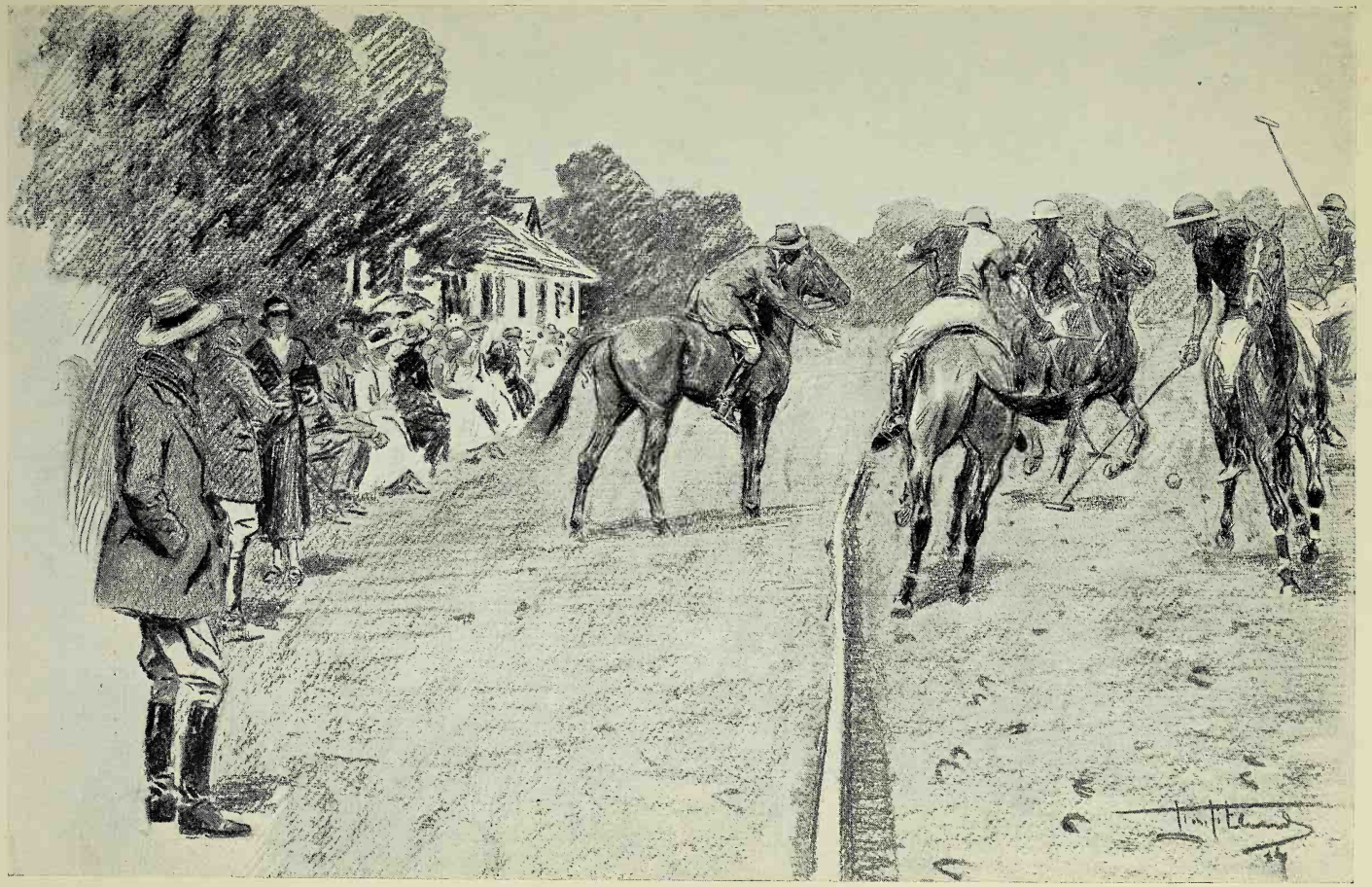
The "Ashley" head for long hitting.

Breaking to stick and ball must not be confused with the rider's hitting practice. Too much time is often spent with young ponies on this stage of their breaking, possibly owing to the above confusion. It is preferable to get them into a game and to play them as soon as they will tolerate the ball being hit from their back, and to let them get their further experience in the course of play.

Introducing the Pony to the Game

For the first appearance of the pony on the polo ground he should be a spectator only, and thereafter his education should be gradual. Here, as in all other departments of breaking, we should be satisfied with a little at a time. This is always the surest way of avoiding failures and retrogression. One should always be content, when a pony is taken up to the ground for the first time, to let him stand in the shelters, take stock of his surroundings and do nothing else; there is quite sufficient novelty in this to absorb his attention, and there is as much as he is capable of assimilating at one time.*

* Trainers of racehorses well understand the value of this and take the opportunity of sending their highly strung and nervous youngsters to a racecourse, of having them walked about the paddock and of making them stand in the saddling stalls so that the exciting sights and sounds are not unfamiliar when they turn out for their first day of racing.



SO MUCH CAN BE DONE WHILE UMPIRING TO MAKE THE PONY'S EARLY EXPERIENCE SUCCESSFUL.

On his second visit a spell of umpiring is best, and we must be guided by the way he stands the other ponies galloping about as to how much we do with him. At the least I advise two or three days' umpiring before we play him. It is best not to let a young pony on which one is umpiring go back to the shelters at the end of the chukker. It is better to keep him out and ride him for a second chukker, and then to dismount in midfield and to *lead* him to the shelters.

So much can be done while umpiring to make the polo pony's early experience successful. We can seize opportunities of galloping slowly behind the game, stopping, turning, riding him over the boards, showing him that on no account must he hang to the shelters, and we can gradually quicken things up for him till by the third day, if all has gone well, we can, on occasions, be galloping as fast as we would in a real chukker, stopping suddenly, turning, and swinging with the game. There is, further, this advantage: we can find out whether the pony is suitably bitted. There is no way of telling this *for certain* except in a game, but it is often possible to find out the correct bit while umpiring. Nothing would persuade me to miss this one first day of letting the pony be an onlooker, followed by two or three days of umpiring, as the risk of a failure is greatly diminished by this procedure.

There is a great difficulty in most clubs of getting a cantering chukker for a young pony. There ought to be at least one slow chukker on every polo practice day, to give men an opportunity of introducing their youngsters to the game; but it is rarely attempted, so that umpiring has to take its place. Early in the season, before ponies are fit, there is more chance of these slow chukkers, but later, when polo has really started, nobody wants to go slow, and if the man with a young pony does not play to the standard of speed set by the others, he is accused of spoiling sport. If the pony has been well prepared, taught to stop correctly and often, and if the right bit has been found for him; further, if these umpiring games have not been omitted, ponies need not suffer damage by being played fairly fast within the first fortnight or three weeks of their appearance on the polo ground; but they should not be "driven" unless they are very placid animals. Yet, on the other hand, if they are free movers it may upset them more to try to play them slowly than to let them play their own pace. My friends have often said to me, "Are you not playing that pony a bit too fast for its first game?" but if I had played it more slowly I should have had to be constantly pulling and restraining. I have had plenty of disappointments through ponies not being fast enough for the game and through their being cowards, but I have only had one failure through a pony pulling and getting out of hand. This was a thoroughbred mare that had been raced, a placid creature, perfect

in her slow paces, but when asked to go fast she quietly took hold, galloped on, and no bit or feat of strength could stop her under ten or twelve lengths.

Great care must be taken to avoid a collision, and it is necessary to bear in mind that the risk of one is greater before a pony has had some experience of the game than later. They often have no idea of pulling up of their own accord to avoid an accident or of sheering off or of bracing themselves to minimise the effect of a bump at a severe angle.

Always have your pony led over the boards for you to mount, and in his first season always dismount in midfield and lead him back. If he has shown a tendency to hang to the shelters, it has a good effect to turn him away from them at the end of a chukker and to gallop on a few lengths before dismounting.

If the stable is any distance from the ground, ponies should be walked there and back, and curb-chains, boots, and bandages should be removed for the journey.

Having got the pony into the game, the player must not be disappointed if it appears, in the course of the early games, that his preparation has been insufficient.

There may be some point (such as facing galloping ponies, riding off, meeting the ball, or nervousness when the ball is thrown in) that calls for further special training outside the game. It may even be that a complete recapitulation is indicated, from long reining onwards. In any circumstances it will be of great benefit to have him exercised regularly in the long reins instead of the monotonous trail on the high roads.

The winter he should spend at grass, well fed with hay and corn during inclement months. Although an untried pony that has spent a winter hunting will be an easier animal to train for polo, I do not recommend hunting for a pony that has already had a season in the game; a complete rest for mouth and limbs is more important.

CHAPTER XI

SPECIAL TRAINING FOR THE SHOW-RING

HOWEVER good a performer in the hunting-field a horse may be, or however good a player at polo, he will not stand much chance in the show-ring without a little extra polish, although, strictly speaking, a horse that has been broken on the lines laid down should require no further schooling. Nevertheless, a short special course will improve the chances of even the best broken horse.

Unless one goes to this trouble, an unsuccessful appearance in the show-ring will leave a feeling of dissatisfaction, a wish that it were all to come over again, because one feels that the horse has not done himself justice. The only way to obviate this is to get him "word-perfect," bearing in mind not only his breaking for general utility as a hunter, but also his fleeting appearance before the judge's eye.

The first pace at which hunters are judged is the walk, and if the horse strides freely and boldly round with no tendency to jog, "carrying his own head," and giving the onlooker the impression of attending to his business, a favourable first impression will have been created.

And here it will not be out of place to say a word about the rider's demeanour. One notices a great tendency amongst competitors to ride round with their eyes glued on the judge as if they are afraid they will miss his signal to come into the centre, and so jeopardise their chance of a prize. Of course, this is absurd, as the judges, if they intend to have a horse called in, will see that the stewards do so, and that the competitors are placed in their proper order. The exhibitor will give a much better show if he is attending strictly to the matter in hand, which is to keep the horse going in the best form.

At the trot the horse should stride out freely but collectedly down the long sides of the ring, and turn the corners in a thoroughly balanced manner.

At the gallop, while going fast he should be just sufficiently collected to give the impression that he *could* go faster, and he should come well under control at the corners by means of the direct flexion. He should always lead correctly, and if he should take hold and be inclined to pull, the rider must be skilful enough to hide from the judges that he is having a bad time, or, indeed, having any difficulty at all. The same holds good if the horse should be cantering falsely or disunited; the

rider should use the aids to correct this in such a way as to be unnoticed by the onlooker.

A word here about shoeing for the show-ring. The ground is so often slippery that it is well to shoe with prominent calkins, so that neither the rider's attention nor that of his mount need be diverted from giving the best show by the fear of a slip.

To sum up, the rider must not only ride so that his horse gives as favourable an impression as possible, but also to impress upon the judge what a pleasant ride he is going to have if he selects this particular horse for a personal trial. This is a quarter of the battle ; another quarter is to have your horse so well schooled that this favourable impression will not be lost when the judges come to ride him. With the same object in view, he should be trained to stand like a rock while being mounted, while the reins are being gathered up and stirrups altered to the right length.

There must be no hanging to horses standing in the middle, and it is therefore of advantage to school him at home in company.

When it comes to the time that the horse's conformation is to be judged, the exhibitor must have taught his horse to stand in the most becoming attitude possible (in the old-fashioned horsy language, " with a leg at each corner ").

Then comes the moment for running out in hand. The instruction on page 155 about jogging out in hand does not hold good in this case. In order to test the horse's soundness and his way of going, a slow jog with a loose rein is the best, but to show himself off and to make the best impression he must have been taught to try to trot faster than the man running beside him, who should have to restrain him by the bit. The stable attendants at Tattersall's are past-masters at this, and can make an indifferent horse show himself to great advantage. The training for this requires one man to run the horse out and another to drive him forward with the lunge-whip. The former should have a riding-whip in his left hand, which he uses behind his back to touch the horse every time his assistant uses the lunge-whip. Gradually the lunge-whip can be laid aside and only the cutting-whip used. Thus the habit of moving briskly forward in hand will become established.

In the classes for young horses and stallions which are only shown in hand a leading-rein eight feet long is best. At the end of the run, instead of stopping and turning in the ordinary way—*i.e.*, away from the groom—the horse can be taught to canter round in a small circle at the full length of the rein with the groom in the centre. On the completion of this turn, he shortens the rein again and leads him back at the trot or walk, whichever is the pace being tested. The schooling for this follows the course of long reins. After the horse has been

SHOWING TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE.

taught to canter calmly in a small circle we should arrange to trot him down one side of the enclosure, and then at the corner let out the leading-rein and show him the whip to make him spring into the canter. The corner helps to prevent him from enlarging the circle, and the rein should be shortened on the completion of the right angle turn for the horse to be trotted down the side which is at right angles. The arc of the turn should then be gradually increased until a complete turn is made and the horse trots or walks back in his tracks. Horses and ponies taught to turn neatly and temperately in this way make a very good impression, but it often involves trouble to train them. Nevertheless, I think the trouble is amply repaid.

Snaffle-bits are out of favour with judges in the show-ring, and I doubt whether any horse stands a chance unless he is shown in a double bridle *and without a martingale*. If he has a very light mouth and goes best in a snaffle, the bit in Fig. 65 can be used with a very loose curb-chain. This is no more severe than a snaffle, but has the outward appearance of a double bit.

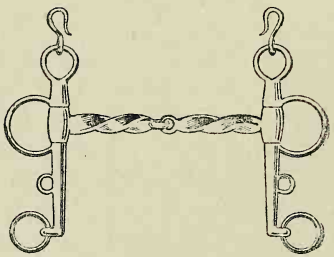


Fig. 65.
Jointed Snaffle.

Care in the selection of suitable saddlery is of considerable importance; the weight of reins, a suitable width of the nose-band, and a neat and well-fitting bridle are all telling points. A badly fitting saddle can smother a horse's shoulder, whereas one specially designed and fitted can improve the look of a horse's fore end by twenty-five per cent.

It is generally believed that only a pony that has played at least one season can compete successfully in the show-ring, but I do not entirely agree. I have known several ponies that have never seen polo and that have been placed above experienced players. The game may spoil a pony for showing, while the preparation for the show-ring cannot but improve a pony for the game. An enthusiastic breeder and exhibitor might even think it worth while to keep a prize-winning pony out of polo, or a hunter out of hunting, with the express idea that otherwise they might lose their show form or become blemished or worn.

Often at local shows the polo ponies are judged by the hunter judges, so that a little observation of their crude methods in testing polo ponies gives the cue to the preparation necessary. A pony that is carefully prepared for its entry into polo should, however, be absolutely suitable, and there is nothing else that it will have to learn except to stride well out at the walk and trot and show well in hand.

The bit should look as simple as possible. I once exhibited a pony

in an elbow cheek bit, but with an ordinary half-moon mouth. The judge asked: "Why have you got the pony in such a severe bit?" I showed him by the mouth that, far from being severe, it was the mildest of bits. The pony got first prize, but it was a narrow escape, and a lesson to me never to show a horse in anything conspicuous.

A word with reference to training horses for classes with a height limit will be useful. It so often happens that one has a horse or a pony so near the border-line of height that there will be doubt as to whether he can pass under the required standard. Some days he will and some days he will not. It may not be generally known that there is considerable elasticity in the height of a horse. A horse that is fresh and full of life will measure an inch at least taller than one that is tired or underfed. The question is: Which is the true height of the horse? Before the war there was a height limit for polo ponies, and a pony that was four years old and upwards could be officially measured and then registered at Hurlingham for life. No matter how much it grew after this, the pony was always eligible for playing. The less said the better about the cruelties that were practised to bring a big pony down to the required height. Hurlingham issued a brochure with instructions to guide horse-owners on this subject of measuring. It began with a description of the muscles and bony structures which govern the height at the wither; then followed the instruction that a pony, suitably exercised and dieted, would measure at least an inch, sometimes two, less than when he was in playing condition. This instruction of suitable diet and exercise was often very liberally interpreted, and the candidate for registration was sometimes walked thirty or forty miles during the night before measuring, starved for twenty-four hours, and would very likely be given a dose of physic into the bargain. The animals were sometimes half dead when they were presented for measurement. The shoes were removed, and their feet were pared down, and the withers shaved; then, if they passed under the 14·2 standard for a fraction of a second, that was all that was required. Of course, this was an exceedingly undesirable state of affairs, and attempts were made over and over again to tackle the difficulty. I have been present at many discussions to settle this vexed question of measurement. There is always a plea for measurement to take place when a pony is in a "natural condition." But the definition of what is a natural condition is always a difficulty. If we say that a pony should be measured before he goes into the show-ring, he will be corn-fed and shod, which can hardly be called in natural condition. A grass-fed pony, ungroomed and unshod, might be so called, but it would be impossible to arrange to measure him for his class in this state. The only alternative, therefore, is to train the horse to relax his muscles in such a way that his

height will be the same as when he is in natural condition—viz., grass fed—and his shoes should be as thin as possible.

The height limit for polo ponies has now been abolished, and with it the Hurlingham registration, but there are many shows where children's ponies, polo ponies, and hacks have to pass under the standard, and it is insisted upon that such horses are measured before they appear in the ring. They must, of course, be in the very best condition for showing, so unless they are taught to relax their muscles to order, their true height will not be given.

The way to train an animal to drop under the measuring stick is as follows: When the horse is hungry the measuring stick should be taken into his box, and the end of the thumb should be pressed down on the withers while the cross-bar of the standard lies over the withers. As soon as the horse drops appreciably, which he will do if we are only persistent enough, he should be made much of and given a handful of oats. After ten or twelve trials of this he will show marked improvement, dropping when the thumb is pressed on the wither, and after a few days he will lower himself to the extent of half to three-quarters of an inch as soon as the measuring stick is placed in position. It is the duty of the measurer at a show to do his best to get a horse to pass under the standard for the classes with a height limit, and he should welcome any special training that the horse may have had to enable him to do this.

CHAPTER XII

FIGHTING IT OUT WITH THE HORSE, AND CURING VICE

Napping, Jibbing, and Rearing

I COUPLE these three together because the first, a not uncommon occurrence at some time with every horse, if not tactfully handled, may lead to the second and third. Further, the vices of jibbing and rearing will not be set up without some previous act of opposition or rebellion calling for intelligent treatment on the part of the rider.

Throughout this book I have assumed a fairly smooth career for the breaker and for the horse that has to be broken, and if breaking were to proceed on such simple lines there would be little skill required; but there is always resistance on the part of the horse, opposition, and impatience of control, and this may become downright aggressiveness. Nowadays this last is rarer than it used to be, probably on account of the more rational handling of the young animal, and also, with the spread of education, the modern groom is more self-controlled. I can remember that in my youth there were men* who made a special profession of handling and training refractory horses, and they travelled all over the world, giving public exhibitions showing how these savages, man-eaters, and rebels could be subdued in a single séance. They even advertised for horses which were useless on account of their vice and savagery to provide suitable subjects for their exhibitions. One rarely comes across horses of this description now, but the rider must be prepared at all stages for more or less determined resistance, and he must be horseman enough to fight it out without compromise. These fights must, however, not be sought; it is better to avoid them by opposing our intelligence to the horse's strength. Only when we are absolutely certain that the horse understands fully what is required of him, and is physically capable of doing what we want, should we forcibly counter opposition and resistance. It is, however, of the utmost importance that the methods we employ should be rational and not executed blindly and without method. One often sees a rider so exasperated by the persistent disobedience of a horse that he "sets about it and gives it a good hiding." This may have the effect of

* To mention a few: Sample, Galvaine, Rarey, Hayes, Norton B. Smith.

relieving the breaker's feelings, but it is in no way calculated to make the horse perform the particular movement to which he is showing objection. All coercion must be exercised in such a way that it is in opposition to the rebellious movement of the horse.

I am never sanguine about curing vice when, through bad riding, it has become habitual, but the defences to which a horse resorts in the course of breaking can be successfully combated. The breaker must have time at his disposal, for, to quote Fillis, "a lesson should never terminate on account of the resistance of the horse," and further, in the struggle for supremacy we must not be too nice in our methods. To quote Fillis once more: "The moment a horse shows fight, I shake him up vigorously, but rationally. We should not tickle him with the spur, which would only aggravate the horse's resistance. On the contrary, our attack on him should be somewhat brutal, so that he may immediately feel that his strength must yield to a superior force. . . . As regards myself, once in the struggle I pay little heed to lateral or diagonal equitation. I don't care if I increase the commotion; my great point is to be master, and to make the horse understand that his defences are in vain." But this does not mean that whip, spur, or rein should be used without regard to the effect we wish to produce. On the contrary, it is worse than useless in these struggles to do anything with any of the aids other than to meet opposition with opposition. There may, however, be more than mere resistance. Often a horse will, as a defence, perform some other previously learnt exercise, in spite of all we can do to prevent him. It is a very disconcerting defence, for instance, for the horse to rein back in spite of all our efforts to drive him forward with whip and spur.

For this reason I am strongly against buying other men's failures. The temptation is great, especially when one sees a good horse going downhill in the hands of an indifferent horseman. The evil results in this case are not as temporary as people imagine; on the contrary, permanent harm is usually done. I have occasionally bought both hunters and polo ponies from men whom I have imagined to be worse horsemen than myself, and who have been unsuccessful with them. I have been able to make improvements, but never to eradicate the faults entirely. Therefore, if we find, on trying a vicious horse, that he can do the direct flexion and is already obedient to the legs, this would not be a promising proposition, because we should not know where to begin his reschooling, and it would be fairly certain that his vice was due to his temper having been spoilt. If, on the contrary, we find that he has *not* been taught complete obedience to the aids, we should probably find, after a course of the school work I recommend, that his vice had disappeared. In this case it is necessary to go back a long way, and we

may have again to put him through a short course of long reins, followed by the early school exercises.

Another defence which often disturbs the even tenor of breaking is for the horse to refuse to straighten himself, and to passage to the right when we try to make him passage to the left, or *vice versa*. Here Fillis's method is the best. Take the horse into the middle of the school and drive the heel or spur hard into the rebellious side, making several turns on the fore-hand until he gives in, and then try him again at the exercise at which he has failed. This is usually successful. Persistence on the part of the breaker may not, however, have the desired effect, but may, instead, increase the stubbornness of the horse, until he adopts one of the following defences :

Rearing is the most dangerous of all defences, and if, in the course of breaking, a horse shows a tendency to rear, we should employ all our tact to prevent him from gaining the knowledge that we are helpless, and that he is master of the situation as long as he practises this vice. If the rider is taken by surprise, he may be thrown back, and will then be in danger of putting weight on the reins, and what may just have been an indication may become a full and dangerous rear. The rider is helpless on a rearer, and the horse often displays great cunning, selecting for displaying his vice a place where the rider's helplessness is greatly increased, such as a slippery road, or when surrounded by trees, or in a crowded gateway or stable yard at a meet; but, as stated above, one is *at all times* at a rearer's mercy. Nothing would induce me to buy such a horse, and if I have ever done so inadvertently, I have sent him to auction without name or description.

The danger in rearing is threefold. The rider may lose his balance and fall off. The horse's hind legs may give way under the strain, and he may collapse, in which case the rider will run the risk of the horse falling on him or, as it is often preceded by jibbing and followed by wheeling round, the horse may slip up and fall. There may also be danger to other people.

Some breakers advocate as a cure driving the horse in long reins, inducing him to rear, and then pulling him over backwards. I have tried this, but the horse has always known better than to rear when he knew that I was master of the situation.* I have heard of riders who have deliberately pulled a horse over backwards in a ploughed field and

* A friend of mine tells me that he has found this way of dealing with a rearer successful on more than one occasion. He had the horse in long reins driven up to a wall or fence, in which position there was no difficulty in getting it to rear and in pulling it over. One lesson proved effective in each case. I have not had to deal with a rearer since he told me of this (and I hope I shall never have to), but I can recommend a trial of this method, as my friend is a man of wide experience.

REARING IS THE WORST VICE OF ALL.

jumped clear to avoid being fallen on. I have never been brave enough to try this, and so do not advocate it. Breaking a bottle of water over a horse's head as he rises, has been given to me as an infallible cure, but this sounds to me such a desperate and dangerous remedy that I cannot consider it within the bounds of rational horse-breaking.

As a means of preventing a horse from contracting the habit, we must consider what would cause a horse to adopt it as a defence. The answer is that in the first instance it might be an attempt to escape from a too strong pull with too severe a bit, and that, having thereby achieved the discomfiture of his rider, he has deliberately tried it on again. It is therefore important to make sure that the bit is not too severe or the curb-chain too tight, and then, as a rear is always preceded by the horse getting behind his bit, to train him to move forward with great freedom on leg pressure. The horse has to stop in order to rear, so that a tendency to be behind the bit, if not promptly and effectively countered, may result in rearing. Although a horse with a tendency to rear should be taught the rein back, he should not be practised in it.

Should one be caught in the course of a ride by a rearing horse, this is the method to adopt. We will assume that he has taken his rider by surprise and has executed one rear. As his fore feet come to the ground, one heel should be driven into the horse's side (selecting the side to which we have found he answers more readily), and at the same time the rein on the same side should be drawn outwards and downwards. This being the turn on the fore-hand, he will be prevented from fixing his hindquarters, which he would have to do in order to rear. He should be sent round a few times, and then driven forward. Even though this is successful, he may try it on again, but next time, being on our guard, we ought not to be taken by surprise. We ought to be able to feel that he is contemplating a rear; he will get behind his bit and slacken his pace.

Jibbing is another defence to which a rebellious horse may resort. Here again force cannot be employed without grave uncertainty as to the outcome of the struggle. If we can keep the horse on the move we can continue the fight, but at the very first sign of jibbing we must, as in the case of rearing, change the point at issue. This must not be regarded as "giving in"; rather is it an intelligent anticipation of a state of rebellion where the horse (which we must always remember is the stronger of the two) may get into a frame of mind which refuses all movement, and as a result he gains knowledge of his power. The signs that he is near to jibbing will be a dead feeling of his mouth and sides. The neck gives way to a lateral pull of the reins without the rest of the fore-hand following, and the hind part becomes immobile to the indications of the leg. Jibbing

is a vice much more common in harness, and, because of the extra risk on account of the vehicle, more serious. Too heavy a load, the discomfort of an ill-fitting collar, or a collar sore, are the principal causes of jibbing in harness, and, as these three predisposing evils are absent, jibbing in the saddle is rare. When it has occurred with me it has been the last resort of a rebellious horse that I have been tactless enough to sicken by unduly prolonging an exercise which he has found difficult or irksome. The tactful breaker will not risk such a complete rebellion, but, assuming that the preparation had been incomplete, would rather go back to some previous lesson that the horse has shown himself capable of performing with ease and precision, and again work up from that through the progressive steps to the point where rebellion occurred. It is wise, then, to be satisfied with the smallest sign of surrender, to make much of the horse, and dismount.

Jibbing is often mismanaged. I have seen a rider, whose horse has stopped with him, pat him on the neck and soothe him, and then, when he has coaxed him forward, set about him with whip and spur. In other words, he has made much of him for disobedience and beaten him for compliance to his wishes. This is a complete reversal of the principles of horse-breaking.

If a horse jibs or tries any rebellious movement on the road where the rider is at a disadvantage, and where he is unable to tackle the rebel on account of slippery surface or traffic, he must act on the assumption that the horse has been taken out before being made sufficiently obedient to the aids. Before tarmac became universal, and when there were no motors, even the high roads were not slippery, and the slower moving and less frequent traffic gave one a chance with a refractory horse. Nowadays it is impossible to cope on the high road with a horse that spins round, turns up side roads to make for home, or stops dead at the approach of some offensive object and rears or jibs when tackled. The skilful, knowledgeable breaker arranges to have his fights with his pupil in the privacy of his schooling enclosure.

Shying

A horse will usually give its rider warning that it intends to shy. As we ride along we are suddenly made aware that there is some object ahead which has aroused the horse's interest. His head is raised, his ears cocked, and his eyes are glued to the tree-stump, motor, or whatever the object of terror may be. Next, the horse will glance round to either side, apparently to see if the way is clear for him to spin round. The rider's course of action is clear. He must close his heels against the

horse's side to prevent him slackening his pace and stopping. If the shy is from something on the right, the horse will try to turn his head towards it and swing his quarters away to the left. The left heel must therefore be pressed to the horse's side with greater force than the right to counter the movement, and the left rein must draw the head to the left with the right rein pressed against his neck to keep the fore-end straight. This is "lateral equitation," to which we must nearly always resort to overcome a horse's defences or any acts of rebellion. The breaker will find that he can, by the above method, ride a horse straight past an object at which he has been accustomed to shy.

Bolting

This must not be confused with running away or pulling. I have known horses with light mouths to bolt. Pullers often run away with riders too weak to stop them, but if one has once ridden a bolting horse, one can never again mistake a horse that is running away, through pulling in excess of our strength, for a bolter. With a bolter the animal's instinct of self-preservation is in abeyance, and he dashes along at full speed regardless of his own safety. The rider cannot turn him, stop him, or, indeed, make any impression on his mouth.

If a horse bolted with me, without cause, I should deal with him in the manner I advised for the rearer. I should get rid of him. If we both survived the first affair, and if it had not taken too long to get him under control, and if, in addition, there was a possibility of some legitimate cause for his having taken fright, I might give him one more chance; but his second effort should be his last under my ownership. As a matter of fact, pulling, followed by running away, can degenerate into something so near to bolting that for practical purposes they are the same. It may be found impossible to stop the runaway, and it may only be when the horse finds himself in a tight place that he will allow himself to come under control, and that the rider realises then that he is not actually bolting.

To cure a puller I can suggest nothing except a course of breaking, making the horse adopt the direct flexion at all his paces, and, last but not least, the selection by means of exhaustive trial of a suitable bit. Many riders of considerable experience recommend, as regards running away, that when the horse shows signs of slackening his pace we should "set about him" and take him an extended gallop on our own account. I can only recommend the reverse; if the horse shows signs of having had enough, get him stopped, then dismount, and make much of him. Then remount, set him off again, and stop him before he has got fairly

into his stride, and again make much of him. If we have been successful and our strength holds out, we might repeat the lesson two or three times.

The way to stop a runaway or a bolter is to saw at his mouth with the snaffle-bit and try to throw him out of his stride, and then, when he shows some signs of control, to get him to stop by hook or by crook. A steady pull at the reins will avail you nothing, and will probably exhaust you. For this reason it is wise, as soon as you realise that the horse is getting away with you, immediately to do all you can to get him stopped.

I have only been bolted with twice. On one occasion I was riding a horse so light in the mouth that he would hardly go up to a snaffle-bit. Twice he stopped with me, reared, and spun round. Each time I was able to get him turned and to drive him forward again. About two miles from home he suddenly swung through an open gate and made a bee-line across country for the stable, although he was entirely strange to the neighbourhood. The first hedge we came to was unjumpable, being a bullfinch of thick trees fourteen or fifteen feet high and ten or twelve feet thick. I could neither turn him nor make any impression on his mouth. I had to let him make for it, but felt certain that he would stop. However, he went straight into it without slackening his pace in the slightest, and was brought to a standstill through sheer force, shooting me off over his shoulder. For a second or two he stood groaning with rage, extricated himself, and made off for home out of the gate by which he had entered the field. I examined the place where he had charged the hedge, and found that he had embedded himself three or four feet, and broken branches, some of them as thick as my arm. I sold him to a local riding-school after they had promised they would never let him out into the open. He made an exceedingly placid school horse, and scores of beginners had their first lessons on him. The other occasion was when I was quartered at Bulford. A very good-looking horse was sent to us from Remounts. I gave him a fortnight in the school, and he learned all the school movements perfectly and proved thoroughly docile with a snaffle mouth. I rode him on parade a few times, and he behaved quite well, although he never gave me confidence, as he always selected awkward places for getting behind his bit and playing up, such as slippery roads or in traffic. One day I rode him through Sling Plantation, and I had the greatest difficulty in controlling him and in steering my way through the trees. As soon as he got into the open he made off, and I thought how unwise he was to select Salisbury Plain with the miles of open country for his adventure. However, he went three miles as hard as ever he could go, and all my endeavours to bring him under control or to steer him were fruitless.

It became a question of which of us would become exhausted first. As there was no necessity to guide him or steady him, he was the first to show signs of fatigue, and he was nearly in a state of collapse when I got him stopped. I turned him towards home, and as he recovered I felt certain that he would set off again if I let him get out of a trot. I was spared the indignity of having to refuse to ride him again, as he was found to be a mange suspect, and was sent to the veterinary camp, and I lost sight of him. Those are two typical examples of bolting. A typical example of running away was an experience of my daughter at an agricultural show. A horse which she was riding for a dealer in the jumping competition did a perfect first round, but his pace gradually got quicker and quicker till the last jump was taken at racing pace, and he then made off for the crowd, apparently with the intention of jumping into it. She got him turned and made six complete circles of a very big ring at full gallop (just managing to turn him at each corner) before she got him under control and stopped. This was an extreme case of running away, only removed from bolting by the fact that she was able to turn him twenty-four times in the course of his career.

Bucking

If a horse bucks while he is moving forward he is not difficult to sit, but a horse that stops to buck—still more one that turns and bucks—is an impossible proposition and will unseat any rider if he persists long enough. The only chance one has with such an animal is to drive him forward, and the only way to stop a horse from bucking is to hold the hands high, jerk the bit up in his mouth, and thus prevent him from getting his head down.

Kicking

To correct a kicking horse one must seize the moment that his hind legs are coming off the ground and jerk the bit up in his mouth, as with a bucking horse. Cow-kicking—that is, striking out with one hind leg—is more difficult to deal with; we are unable to anticipate him because we cannot detect a horse's intention. Often we cannot even tell, from his back, that he has cow-kicked.

Plunging

An impatient horse restrained by the bit may plunge. He apparently gives way to the pull of the reins, but gets his hind legs underneath him and then plunges forward. The only way to deal with

this is not to trust an apparent yielding, but to be ready to give him a jerk in the mouth as he plunges. It is, as in the case of cow-kicking, very difficult to detect his intention.

Tongue Over the Bit

This is the bugbear of all breaking. If this habit is once established, the horse's mouth is gone for ever; therefore no pains should be spared to prevent him contracting it. It is easy to say that a horse may begin it by playing with the bit, and may find himself in time with his tongue over it, but why he should persist is not so easy to understand. It must be exceedingly painful, and under no circumstances can he gain anything by it. The effect is extraordinary. His mouth may be one minute so sensitive that a pull at the reins may nearly bring him over backwards; the next, a pull may have no effect on him at all, and he may run away or bolt. If I find a horse or a pony showing indications of this, I examine his mouth very carefully and see if there is any sore place on his tongue that he is trying to save. If I can find no reason for it, I put him through a course of long reins and then try again with a different bit, or one specially designed to prevent this trick, generally in the one illustrated in Fig. 16, which I have found most effective. Some breakers think it is caused by hurrying the breaking, but I am unable to account for it.

Throwing the Head Up and Down

An annoying habit and a dangerous one, as the rider may get his face struck. A horse often lowers his head first as though to gain more force for the upward thrust. The only way to counteract it is to meet the downward thrust with a tug at the snaffle with the hand held high, and the upward thrust with a strong feel on the curb-rein, pressing him forward at the same time.

Refusing

As refusing is a vice usually learnt while the horse is being ridden by a certain man, this man is obviously not the one to cure him. In every hunt there is as a rule a horse-breaker whose principal job in life is to improve sticky jumpers and to cure refusers. He is generally able to do this in the course of one hunt, being a man with a secure seat and light hands and of great experience. He makes it a rule, however, to keep these horses three weeks as a minimum, during which time they have four or five short hunts and perhaps a couple of schools

REFUSERS ARE MADE BY INCOMPETENT RIDERS.

over made fences behind an experienced and competent leader. In the course of these rides and hunts, a horse realises that his mouth is not going to be interfered with, so that he regains confidence and will again begin to jump freely. It is then up to the owner to see that he does not again contract the vice of refusing, but what usually happens is that the breaker gets the horse back over and over again till the owner becomes sick of it and sells him. A horse suffering from any pain or weakness need not, of course, be considered, but only one that has contracted the vice of refusing through being hampered at his jumps by an incompetent rider.

Shying Off the Ball

The same remarks apply here as in refusing. If a pony has got into the way of shying off the ball, the man who has been playing him will not be able to effect the cure unless he so refines his aids that he can avoid the causes which made his pony contract the habit. I will repeat here that ball shyness is nearly always due to interference with the pony's mouth when in the act of striking. The co-ordinate use of the aids has been dealt with in previous chapters, but in hitting the polo ball a further co-ordination is called for. The player's right arm must swing and complete the stroke quite independently of the left arm, which holds the reins and which is guiding the pony, and the rider must be careful not to use his legs except to keep the pony's hind part straight and to urge him forward. When the rider can make a full stroke without his aids taking any part in the movement, he will never cause his pony to become ball shy, and he will be able to cure a pony that has contracted the habit; but it is useless to attempt it otherwise. He will, as with a refuser, have to turn the pony over to some better rider than himself for him to take in hand and effect a cure.

Jogging instead of Walking

Some horses are of a discontented nature or are made so by bad riding. At whatever pace we wish them to go they always want to go one degree faster. If we want them to walk they try to trot (jog), if we try to make them trot they want to break into a canter. It is quite certain that this is a defence, the horse knowing perfectly well what we want. I am convinced of this from the fact that, while he is playing up and his rider is trying to defeat him, he will break out and sweat profusely, and the moment he gives in and is amenable he will become as dry as a bone; also, when we dismount and lead him he will walk

perfectly quietly, only to recommence his annoying tricks when we remount.

The canter from the trot is not so difficult to cope with, for the following reasons. If a horse persistently canters, the rider is not made uncomfortable, and his endurance can therefore outlast that of the rebel; further, the canter can be made use of by making it a lesson in the direct flexion and in balance. Should the horse defend himself further by getting behind his bit, we can push him forward into a strong gallop, which, as it increases his exertion, will have the effect of making him reasonable. But the persistence of a horse that will not walk is an exhausting and exasperating affair, and I do not know of any defence more likely to make a rider lose his temper. For these reasons the breaker should be at great pains to prevent his pupil from contracting the habit.

If a horse shows a tendency to this, it will probably be most noticeable as he nears home. The best plan here is, at the onset of excitement, and at the first sign that he is going to jog, to turn him round and walk him away from home, which will always be found to be very discouraging to a horse, and be certain to make him walk. This is the moment to dismount and *lead* him home.

I know of no cure except fatigue coupled with great patience and intelligence on the rider's part. Having first satisfied himself that the horse has no sore place anywhere, and that the bit is suitable, the breaker should set about tiring him. Perhaps a spell of long reins will succeed, followed by a series of correctly executed exercises in the school, such as the passage, the rein back, and long trots with turns to either hand, but not the direct flexion, as the direct flexion puts weight on the hind legs and raises the horse's head, whereas to stride out at the walk he should lower his head and put weight on his fore-hand. Every now and then he should call a halt and try if the horse will walk. If there is the smallest success, he should dismount, slacken the girths, and make much of him, allowing him to stand for some minutes. The breaker must then decide for himself whether he will leave well alone and lead the horse home or whether he will girth him up again and have another try. I have regretted being persistent, and I have on other occasions effected a complete cure by mounting and recommencing five or six times more after the first surrender. It is imperative, however, to have plenty of time at your disposal, because you may be in for a lengthy combat.

If the breaker's groom is a stolid, good-tempered fellow, he may be the better man to undertake the cure. A person of this temperament will, after a ride of a couple of hours, often bring a horse back walking peacefully, although he may have "jogged" persistently

for the first hour and a half. This will have the further advantage of saving the breaker's time and conserving his energy.

Some breakers recommend holding on to a handful of skin on the horse's shoulder or holding on to the horse's ear, but I have not found it necessary to resort to such drastic remedies.

If a horse has any of the above faults to a marked degree, he should not be bought, as it is doubtful whether he can be cured. If he contracts these faults in the course of breaking, the fault is ours, and we must think out where we have gone astray.

NOTE.—I take this opportunity ot inserting the following note on the subject of "napping," which I inadvertently omitted from the first impression:

"If a horse should attempt to spin round (see p. 151) he will generally attempt it to one particular side; the tendency to nap will either be to the right or to the left. A whip, not too flexible, or, better still, a short stick, should be carried on the side towards which the rider expects his horse to 'nap,' then a sharp, light blow on the nose, as he comes round, will deter him from completing the movement. A rider must, however, be very sure of his seat and of the state of the road before attempting it; and, further, he must be sure it is a rebellious movement and not a shy at some unfamiliar object."

CHAPTER XIII

STABLE MANAGEMENT, DIET, AND EXERCISE

I AM aware that this is a large subject, but I only intend to deal with it in so far as it concerns the object of this book—viz., breaking and schooling. For an exhaustive treatise I can recommend my readers to "Stable Management and Exercise" by M. H. Hayes, who has written some four hundred pages on the subject, and who has gone into every detail.

It is of the utmost importance that the breaker should supervise the management of the stable. It will be obvious that however painstaking he may be, and however careful as regards the work outside, his efforts will be in vain if through bad stable management they are nullified. It is not always appreciated how a horse's temper and manners suffer through inexpert treatment indoors, or how they are improved by tactful handling from the groom and by judicious feeding.

The first point to insist upon is that all the movements of the groom while he is near the horse should be restrained and never sudden, and that his voice should never be raised. Stable vices are seldom inherent, but are nearly always the result of resentment, fear, or suspicion.

As I have said elsewhere, a horse's powers of observation are acute, while his powers of expression are so limited and subtle that even the trained observer has difficulty in getting an idea of what is in his mind. Let four strangers go into a horse's box separately, and he will receive the advances of each of them in a different way. He may lay back his ears and look threateningly at the most well disposed. He will look alert and bright at the approach of another. He may be quite indifferent, even lethargic at the approach of a third, and the fourth may make him cower in a corner of his box, apparently in fear. These vagaries are difficult to account for. There must be something in a man's demeanour, clothes, or smell, but I have tried, without much success, to discover the real explanation. A woman wearing fur will usually frighten a horse, and a horse appears to take no notice of a man's facial expression, while if a sudden raising of the hand causes the horse to start away, to lay his eyes back, bite, or kick, we may take it for granted that he has been used to receiving more threats than caresses. Horses are made difficult to shoe or clip through

unsympathetic treatment, and it is of only too frequent occurrence that they are made restless to mount. Horses that are reluctant to enter their box have usually defective sight, while horses that rush through the doorway when leaving their box have, at some time, caught themselves or their saddlery on the door-jamb. It is a mistake to interrupt them at their food, because this irritates them. While a horse is young and learning he is best isolated, but if this is not possible his companion should be placid and should have no restless stable vices or tricks.

It is wise when engaging a new groom to let it be known that if he is kicked or bitten, he will get no sympathy, but will probably lose his job, and it should be explained to him that you consider it his fault entirely if he cannot get on such good terms with his charges as to make such an accident impossible. From another point of view it is a wise precaution, as a man who has been kicked once will probably be kicked again, because it is clear that he is a careless fellow, or a bad-tempered, and even a cruel one. Even if one is insured under Employers' Liability one may be involved in serious expense and responsibility. While the groom is new and untried the breaker should be either in the box or looking over the box door while his pupil has the rugs removed and while he is saddled or harnessed in the breaking tackle. He can gain much information as to the horse's disposition by watching the saddling, and he can see that the groom handles the horse in the way he wants. The breaker and the groom should work in unison with the same end in view, and it can only be after much experience together and after handling many horses that there would be any certainty of this. In other words, the breaker has at first to train two individuals—the horse and the groom.

Grooms are apt to be impatient with their charges. I do not say that they are deliberately cruel, but they are often not very understanding of a horse's psychology and are prone to visit on their charges their displeasure at things in general. I once saw a groom hit a horse on the nose for no other reason than that he had found him in his box with a cast shoe, which necessitated a visit to the blacksmith after he thought that his work for the day was over. On another occasion I overheard a conversation between two trumpeters; one was chaffing the other because his horse had lain down with him in a ford. "Anyway," replied the victim, with satisfaction, "he got wetter than I did." These two stories display a curious frame of mind and furnish a key to much of the illogical treatment that falls to a horse's lot.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that a groom must make friends with a young horse indoors as well as out, and must never lose the confidence or the friendship of a mature one, and he must be able to

distinguish between intention and inexperience. Rough treatment in the stable is bound to react on the horse's manners outside. If any of my readers doubts this, let him imagine what kind of a ride he would get on a horse that had been deliberately teased and bullied in his box until he became almost beside himself.

Another point that must be watched is grooming. There are some thick-skinned, coarse-coated horses that can stand the most vigorous use of the grooming brushes over any part of their body without flinching. There are others which are so thin-skinned and ticklish that the softest body brush, if carelessly used, will nearly drive them mad. The groom must, of course, be able to differentiate between them. Some are so ticklish that nothing but the bare hand can be used to remove the mud from inside the flanks.

I once had a groom who was a very small man, and he had under his care two seventeen-hand horses, with whom it was entirely a point of honour whether they allowed their bridles to be put on by him or not. He had trained them to put their heads down to have the bridle passed over their ears. If they had not done so he would have been helpless, but of one thing one may be quite certain : if his treatment of them had not been rational, kindly, and just, he could not have brought them to this stage of training. I used to leave the handling and long-reining of young horses entirely to him (after I had trained him for about a year), and he became very adept. He was wonderfully clever at giving the early lessons to a three-year-old, and took infinite pains to get them used by progressive stages to the unfamiliar treatment which falls to the lot of every young horse. Before he clipped a youngster for the first time he used to let it stand and watch an old, quiet horse being clipped. He would take an hour to get it used to being rugged. He would first of all lay a stable rubber on its back, then a numnah, then a hood, and then a rug, getting it thoroughly used to each before he passed on to the next, and gradually girthing it with a roller, hole by hole, until sufficiently tight.

At first every piece of saddlery and clothing should be shown to the beginner. He should be allowed to smell it and touch it with his nose, and it should not be put on him until he has stopped snorting and has ceased to regard it with suspicion. For this reason the long hairs that grow from a horse's muzzle and round his eyes should never be cut or singed. They are feelers, and give him warning of the nearness of objects, and if they are cut short they become stiff bristles and a source of irritation to him instead of a protection, which is what they are intended for.

Shoeing, always of the very greatest importance, is especially so with the young horse during breaking. One of the accidents most to

THE SOFTEST BRUSH WILL NEARLY DRIVE THEM MAD.

be feared in the early stages is of the horse striking one leg with the opposite hoof. A splint, necessitating cessation from work, will nearly always be the result of such a blow, and although careful shoeing will not obviate the risk entirely, bad shoeing will certainly increase it. The risk of brushing and hitting while the horse is young, weak, and inexpert is very great, and the result nearly always serious because of the immature condition of the bones and joints.

For this reason bandages should always be used on all four legs, and if these show distinct signs of hitting or brushing, specially designed boots will be still better.

Hunters always, and ponies if they are being schooled on soft ground, should have their hind feet shod with "over-reach" shoes (see Fig. 66). These shoes are difficult to make, and if the blacksmith is not kept up to the mark he will avoid the expenditure of the extra time and trouble by fitting ordinary shoes. In addition, the inside of the hind shoe should be tapered away as in the illustration, and the heels should be somewhat high to ease the strain on the hocks. The illustration also shows a removable calkin fitted on the outside, which I strongly recommend on the hind shoes during breaking.

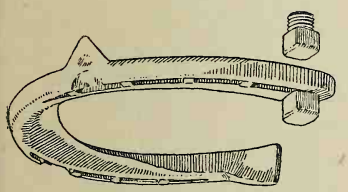


Fig. 66.

Over-reach Shoe with Wedge Heel and Removable Calkin.

An examination should be made of the lips and mouth after every lesson, also the back, withers, sides (and dock if a crupper is used). Any sore place should be at once put under treatment and the horse thrown out of work until it is completely healed.

Diet is a matter that must be left to the groom, unless the breaker is of such leisure that he can attend to it himself, but anyway the general principles must be carefully explained. If the groom and the breaker do not co-operate in the matter of feeding, as in everything else, breaking becomes almost impossible (see "Freshness," p. 153). The most important point for the groom to understand is that corn must be regulated *day by day*. It is no use fighting it out with a refractory horse while he is being stimulated with corn, which can only have the effect of giving him energy to accentuate and prolong the struggle. It may sometimes be necessary to dock the corn altogether for a considerable period. By this means the lessons can be shortened, and the exercise necessary to bring the horse to a receptive frame of mind reduced to a minimum. It must not be considered that I am an advocate of underfeeding, but we must bear in mind that bones and joints suffer from excess of work, and we should therefore reduce the

necessity for exercise to a minimum as long as a horse is young and learning. Some horses, because they take restraint and coercion very much to heart, wear themselves thin. If we try to counteract this by an increase of the corn ration we only accentuate the evil. There is no use getting discouraged about this loss of condition. There will come a time when a horse begins "to do," *and it will coincide with the time when he begins to take kindly to his lessons.*

During breaking, exercise as apart from actual lessons should as far as possible be in the long reins, and the groom should be carefully trained till he becomes proficient, otherwise the breaker must carry it out himself, but this is wasting the time and strength of the expert.

In conclusion, I should like to advise that, as successful breaking adds materially to the value of a horse, the groom should be pecuniarily interested in the outcome of each venture, and in return for this he must be made to co-operate and follow out instructions conscientiously and loyally.

CHAPTER XIV

HINTS ON BUYING HORSES AND PONIES

"In the choice of a horse and a wife a man must please himself."—WHYTE-MELVILLE.

I WOULD as soon describe in detail the woman a man should marry as the horse he should buy. It is the custom in this country to fall in love before committing matrimony, and a man should fall in love with a hunter or polo pony before contemplating purchase; and just as it is unwise to trust one's judgment of the young woman one meets only in society, a dealer's yard (the best analogy I can think of) should not be the place in which to make a decision about a horse. But if we see a hunter behaving sensibly at covert side and then performing well throughout a good hunt, this would be a suitable animal in which to become interested. If we see a polo pony play well for two good chukkers in a match, we should not be ill-advised to inquire whether it was for sale and whether the price was one we could afford. As we reach mature years a *mariage de convenance* is perhaps indicated, and as we leave middle age we may more readily buy our horses according to the theories that our experience has evolved, or even on the recommendation of friends, provided that they are horsemen, men whom we can trust and who know exactly our requirements. If a man adheres to the determined, preconceived, and detailed idea of the type of woman he intends to marry, he will either die a bachelor or make an unhappy marriage; if a man refuses to entertain the purchase of any horse that does not answer the description he has fixed in his imagination, he will miss half the season and probably, in the end, fall a victim to some horse-dealer's blandishments, and buy a horse that proves unsuitable. It is well that tastes differ, or we should all want to marry the same woman and buy the same horse. How divergent are our tastes can be seen by a comparison of the types of horses one sees at a meet of hounds and on a polo-ground, and it is difficult to imagine how some of them ever found purchasers. I am too gallant to complete the analogy, and as I am on dangerous ground I will pass on.

Before going any further I should like to say a word regarding a much-criticised class—the horse-dealer—and at the same time a word also about another class that usually escapes criticism—the horse-buyer. The former has a reputation for suppressing such material facts as are

likely to prejudice the sale of a horse and for giving undue prominence to such points, real or imaginary, as are calculated to hurry the decision of a doubting and reluctant buyer. It is a curious trade. On the one hand we have the seller, bent on obtaining the highest price possible for his wares, and on the other the buyer, out for a bargain by hook or by crook. It is difficult to say which is more to blame for the distrust that exists between the two. There is no doubt that dealers resort to tricks and fairy tales to enhance the value of their wares and to conceal faults, and that buyers protect themselves by similar fairy tales on their side, with a view to cheapening their purchases. It is like many of the problems still unsolved by natural historians. Does the buyer tell "whoppers" to protect himself against the wiles of the dealer, or has the dealer adopted the protective colouring of subterfuge in the course of the struggle for financial existence? On the whole, my sympathies are not entirely with the buyer; on the one hand I picture him turning over a new leaf and resolving to go to his dealer and to leave himself unreservedly in his hands as regards price, manners, performance, and soundness; on the other hand, I think of his expecting every good quality and no bad ones, whether the price is to be £75 or £750. I am not sure that in the course of the search for perfection at a low price he does not "ask for it"; equally so when he imagines that only a dear horse can be a good one. A dealer once told me that he had not got a client who would cross the road to look at a horse that was described as anything short of perfection, but that if he asked £200 for a good-looking one, up to weight, and if the buyer discovered for himself that it took hold a bit, that it had a slight spavin, and that his veterinary surgeon found, in addition, a speck in its eye, he would quite possibly get him to make a sporting offer of £100, whereas, if he had written to him in the first place and told him of these defects, he would not have come a mile to look at it at £50.

I always advise being particularly direct in transactions with horse-dealers. I will not go so far as to say that it pays, but one thereby avoids the more time-honoured "ramps." Dealers resent having their horses decried, whether good, bad, or indifferent, while they appreciate any praise one can bestow on a good one. If one is shown a bad horse, it is a mistake to tell the owner to take the brute away and then to give him a list of its imperfections. It is quite enough to say to him, "I shan't buy that; have you anything else to show me?" and it is, moreover, much more effective. Nor can I see that it does any harm, or that it is likely to increase the price if we say: "I saw a bay horse of yours out yesterday, carrying your man. He seemed to have good manners, go well, and I think he will suit me. If you will ask a reasonable price I will buy

him." If the dealer, in reply, is foolish enough to say something like this, "You'll have to make up your mind quickly; Mr. Smith is after him, and one or two more," the line to take here is obvious. "Well, finish with Mr. Smith and all the others, and if he is still unsold see me again." If the dealer really has other people interested and he is a good business man, he will simply say the price is so-and-so, subject to being unsold, and if the buyer is an honourable man and Mr. Smith actually bought the horse, he will refrain from reviling the dealer and telling his friends that he has been done out of a good horse by Smith and the dealer between them.

If a man buys a good horse cheap he is apt to boast of his acumen; if he buys one that does not turn out well, whether cheap or dear, he is apt to exaggerate the blame due to the seller. Dealers are often in a very awkward predicament. Too many of their customers are bad riders, uninterested in horse-mastership, with idle, stupid, cowardly, or ill-tempered grooms. Their purchases do not turn out well. Then comes the question of an exchange *for a better one*. The dealer must demand something to boot in the exchange. Firstly, because horse number one may be irretrievably spoiled; secondly, because the horse's reputation is to a certain extent damaged; and thirdly, how is he to convince his client that he is getting a better article unless he charges more for it? After two or three such exchanges the unfortunate owner must shudder to think at what price his ultimate purchase stands, and, what is more, it may be the worst horse of the whole procession.

The dealer who is the best judge of a horse, who is a careful buyer, and makes the fewest mistakes, can afford to sell the cheapest. He keeps his horses a shorter time, which reduces his corn bill per horse, he has fewer failures on which to make up the loss, and he turns his capital over oftener in the course of the year. It is also safer to buy from him, as he will be less likely to land you with one of his failures—for it must be borne in mind that someone has to have these failures. I should also prefer a dealer who hunts and plays polo himself, and then one can buy one of his working animals, which will be in reasonably hard condition for a trial.

But the buyer must not delude himself on the point of condition. It is so rare that we can put a horse, fresh out of the dealer's yard, into anything like hard work until he has been acclimatised and conditioned. There are two reasons for this: firstly, his horses are often just over from Ireland, and secondly, even if he has had them for some time, they are curiously fed to preserve an outward appearance of condition and at the same time to keep down the forage bill. This trouble is to a certain extent obviated if we deal with a man who goes well on his

own horses and ponies, as they must be corn fed, but under any circumstances it is well to allow time to elapse before riding a newly purchased horse in a hunt, or a pony in a fast game.

Horses imported from Ireland are a difficult problem unless they are bought in the spring or early summer. I should not expect a hunter, brought over in August or September, to be any good for fast work before Christmas under the most favourable conditions; if imported later than that, the following season would be soon enough to expect hard work. I am unable to account for this delay in acclimatising these horses, but it is a fact which, if ignored, leads to disappointment. The best results are obtained by buying and importing in the warm summer weather and turning the horse out to grass immediately on arrival, without putting him into the stable at all. It is important to examine his teeth before doing this and to have them rasped if necessary. A fairly bare field is best, and then the feed of grass can be supplemented by a daily ration of hay and corn. A young Irish horse treated like this will be more ready for work in three weeks than if he had been stable fed from his arrival. If he comes in looking well and strong it would not be a waste of time to give him a dose of physic. I have seen Irish horses brought over in September, which, after the most careful preparation, ride their first hunt only in January, but they do not reach really good condition until well on in the following season, even after a summer's run at grass and a second preparation. It is only fair to add that many of them will be a year younger than their mouths denote, having had their first teeth removed to make them appear four years old when they are really only three. Experience tells me that whenever a horse is brought from Ireland this three weeks at grass, far from being lost, is time gained, moreover, we may be able to avoid the free gift of a cough to every other occupant of the stable.

Let us now consider how we should go about our purchase. In the first place it is just as important for a buyer as it is for a seller to establish a reputation for fair dealing. Some men of means and position behave with great want of consideration to dealers, especially to the smaller fry—men struggling to earn a living and not in a position to stand up for their rights. After a trial and a veterinary examination the transaction should be closed and not reopened. It then becomes the duty of the new owner to make that horse a success; it has carried him well in his trial, and his veterinary surgeon has certified him sound, or, at all events, sound enough for purchase, and the responsibility is now the purchaser's, not only legally, but morally. He should say to himself: "The horse carried me well and is sound, and my stable management (which includes judicious

feeding, exercising, bitting, and riding) must be such that he continues to be successful." If he goes back on the form displayed when tried, we must blame our stable management or riding, and not the man we bought him from. It may be that we have changed the horse's diet too drastically, or that he is short of exercise, not correctly bitted, or unwell, but we should act on the principle that it should be possible to reproduce the form which gave satisfaction when he was tried. We should, therefore, before making up our minds to buy, decide that we are making a definite purchase, and, having bought, set out with a determination to make a success of it. It is often asked whether a dealer is a good man to buy from; let the purchaser see to it that he is a good man to sell to. He will thereby buy more cheaply and successfully. Further, any man is a good man to buy from, provided the horse is a good one and worth the money, and no eloquence and no charm of manner on the part of the seller can turn a bad horse into a good one.

Most dealers nowadays genuinely try to please their clients, not only by finding them suitable horses, but also by charging them reasonable prices, but there are still a few "exchange-mongers" left, men who, instead of giving a fair trial, over-persuade their customers with the lure "If you don't like him, send him back." I once knew a dealer who held the cynical view that if a customer ever came back to him for a second deal he knew he had not charged him enough over the first transaction. As he put it: "There's more mugs than 'osses." But this was in the old days before motors, when many more horses were wanted. A dealer could not keep his trade if he conducted his business on those lines to-day, but nevertheless even now the public is long-suffering, especially with a plausible, urbane, and tactful business man. If in addition he has a vivid imagination and a good memory, he becomes positively dangerous.

It is no guarantee that a hunter or a polo pony will suit you because you see it going well with a good or even a moderate performer. You may be induced to interest yourself in such an animal, but a personal trial with hounds or in a chukker of polo is of the greatest importance and worth paying for; but it must be remembered that a hunter's or a pony's reputation is quickly ruined, and if such a trial is allowed, and if the animal does not prove suitable, it is only fair that the greatest care should be taken not to give an adverse impression to the onlookers, because, although the animal may not suit you, it may be perfectly suitable for someone else.

It is a mistake to dispense with a veterinary examination, or to buy a horse or pony with a definite unsoundness unless its previous history is known and this fact and the price warrant a risk. A man will

usually get more work out of one sound horse than he will get out of two unsound ones.

It is my opinion that hunters 16·2 and over are so liable to go wrong in their wind that their purchase is a rich man's hobby. These very big horses should be avoided by those who wish their horses to last.

There is very little pleasure in riding a horse that makes a noise, and a horse with a tracheotomy tube is an abomination. Sixteen hands is the ideal height, with a margin of an inch either way. A well-known veterinary surgeon, who examines hundreds of horses in the course of a year, once told me that horses over 16·2 were so often unsound in their wind that it was almost a foregone conclusion that they would fail to pass the test.

While on the subject of height, there is this to be said about the polo pony also: Make it a rule only to buy a pony that will pass under the fifteen-hand standard. Fourteen-three is the ideal height, and 14·2 provided the pony has speed, weight, good bone and staying-power, is not too small. It would not surprise me to see a straight-moving 14·3 pony play nine or ten seasons, or even more. I should say that a 15·1 pony has often passed his best after three. The pony over fifteen hands is too difficult to school, and is, as a rule, too difficult to play except by the very fine horsemen whose handicap is near the seven mark. These big ponies very easily get out of hand and are also more liable to become unsound.

All things being equal, a gelding is preferable to a mare, both as a hunter and as a polo pony. A mare is more temperamental and at certain seasons subject to annoying alterations of character. A gelding is more dependable. There is an idea that for a polo pony a mare is more amenable, but this has not been my experience; in fact, leg pressure and the use of the heel on a mare often upsets her most unpleasantly. It is true that the majority of polo ponies are mares, but this is accounted for by the fact that there is a tendency for mares to be smaller, and that the males are more likely to grow above polo height.

There is one piece of advice that can safely be given regarding the type of saddle horse a man should buy. A very successful Irish horse-dealer once told me that his motto was "Blood to carry weight."

Another of his aphorisms is, "An ounce of blood is worth an inch of bone," which means not only that the dense bone of the thoroughbred of the same dimensions can stand more concussion than that of the coarser bred horse, but also that the well-knit frame, the muscular development, and the nervous system of the former makes him capable of greater exertion than an animal whose size is his only qualification. One sees many horses of elephantine proportions, but few of them are

AN OUNCE OF BLOOD IS WORTH AN INCH OF BONE.

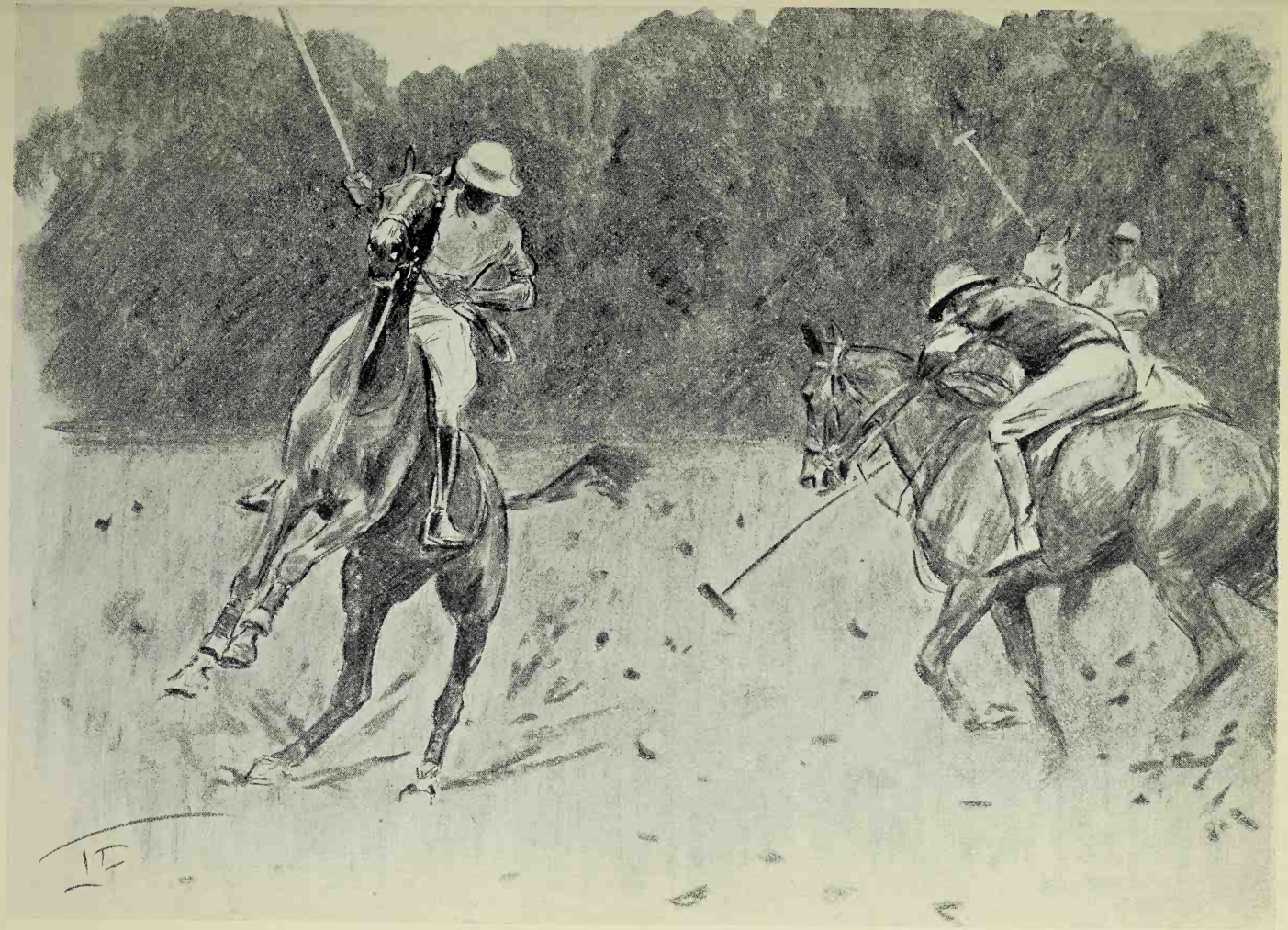
really weight-carriers. They are just big-framed horses well covered with flesh.

He added that he would like to have this motto illuminated like a text and hung conspicuously about his house and stable, so that it would be always before his mind. This is the never-ending quest for the connoisseur in horseflesh—"Blood to carry weight." So for your hunter or polo pony buy a thoroughbred, authentic and in the book, if you can afford to pay the price for such an animal up to your weight. If you cannot afford this luxury, buy one so well bred that in appearance and action it is as like a thoroughbred as possible. The desirable attributes of the well-bred horse are too well known to require enlarging upon here, but I will remind the reader that the extension of the use of wire in fences nearly everywhere has increased the necessity for a speedy hunter in most countries. There is often only one jumpable place, for which one has to race if one wishes to be amongst the first over; further, when fields are large there is often so long to wait before it is one's turn to jump or go through a gate that hounds may well get fields ahead, and then only a fast horse will be able to catch up. Formerly a brilliant galloper, although certainly a luxury, was not so much a necessity as now (although the fact that when the hunt is taxing the speed and endurance of the ordinary horse, the thoroughbred will be galloping well within himself, is always important). One can see the whole of an ordinary hunt on a moderate horse that is a safe and willing jumper when hedges are jumpable everywhere, and one can go the shortest way across country; but since wire has increased, and hedges have become unjumpable, or jumpable only at given places, the whole character of hunting has changed, certainly in wired-in countries; then a hunt resolves itself into a series of races from gap to gap or gate to gate. So by all means go in for a thoroughbred *if* you can find one of size, substance, and bone, *and* temperate, not only when galloping freely, but also when standing at covert side or hacking between coverts. But such a horse is rare, and as a rule has to go through a long period of schooling and experience before it is a safe conveyance and has manners enough to make it an enjoyable mount throughout the whole of a day's hunting. This rarity, and the prolonged education usually required, make such a hunter a very expensive article, often beyond the means of an ordinary man. My advice is, therefore, if you cannot afford a thoroughbred, or if you are not prepared to put the horse through the necessary schooling, to go in for the horse with a sire that is in the book and whose dam is also by a clean-bred stallion. If such a horse has the physical characteristics of the thoroughbred it will be a safer and a cheaper purchase, an easier horse to school, and not so easily spoilt. There are, however, modifying factors worth considering by

men who have not much to spend on their hunters. A horse, coarser bred even than this, will often be a very much cheaper purchase, and, provided he is a certain and clever jumper, his rider will be able to see seven hunts out of ten from start to finish; in two out of ten he will miss the last quarter; but the tenth brilliant affair he will probably be quite out of, almost from the start. It must be understood that in the above assertion I am thinking of the average hunting country and not the brilliant packs of the shires.

Now let us consider the polo pony. In his case also it is unlikely that 14·3 to 15-hand thoroughbred ponies will have quite the right temperament, or that they can be taught to stop suddenly and often in a strenuous eight-minute chukker. Here again caution is necessary. Very satisfactory results are obtained from the pony by a thoroughbred out of a mare that is a good player, perhaps thoroughbred, oftener of unknown pedigree. The clean-bred ponies are not difficult to school *up to a certain point*, but the test comes when they are put to gallop at top speed. They may stop temperately once or twice, but they are apt to get excited and out of hand towards the end of a fast chukker. However well schooled they may be, they will probably require re-schooling after a strenuous match, or will have become so hot as to be almost unridable. The reason is (as I have tried to show in Chapter XII.), that the conformation suitable for the racehorse differs from that of the typical polo pony. The continual stopping and jumping round is, therefore, irksome and painful, so that the pony's temper is upset. However, symmetrical lines, without any deformity, and straight action are of the greatest importance if the pony is to remain sound during his schooling and to play on for a number of years, and the nearer you get to the thoroughbred the more likely you are to find these points of perfect conformation, so this fact has to be considered. There is a further quality to look for, a quality not easily defined—"pony character." You may have two animals of the same height and weight. When they move, one impresses you as a little horse, the other as a pony. It is the latter which will be the easier to school and to play.

The reason for the hankering there is after the thoroughbred for polo is the great increase of pace since the abolition of the offside rule, and there is no doubt that nowadays in good polo one can sacrifice a certain amount of handiness to extreme speed. There is also the same consideration as with the hunter—viz., that when the thoroughbred is galloping comfortably within his powers, the coarser bred pony is going all out and is much harder to hit from. Ponies do not get pulled about as much as they did, but it is essential that it should be easy to stop them smoothly and often. It will be seen, therefore, that the



THE WETTER THE SEASON THE HANDIER A PONY MUST BE.

thoroughbred with the right temperament is the animal to aim for, but as they are so rare, and the risk of failure is so great, I would advise the admixture of pony blood suggested earlier. Consideration must also be given, not only to the class of polo we want the pony to play, but also to the surface of the ground. In India and America the grounds are so smooth and cut up so little that a pony is usually galloping to overtake a rolling ball; in this country grounds are rougher and slower, and ponies have to be steadied and stopped continually, and the worse a polo ground is kept, and the wetter the season, the slower the game and the handier the pony will have to be. It is quite conceivable that a pony suitable for a well-kept London ground would be quickly spoiled on a bumpy country one, and that a pony handy enough to be a success on a slow and cut-up country ground would not have the necessary dash and pace for the best London polo.

Purchase at auction can be satisfactory. In this case a buyer should watch the career of a pony in the game, or a hunter in the hunting-field, and, when the owner's stud is disposed of at one of the auction sales, he can compete for possession. The performances will be known to him, and if the animal's age is suitable, and it proves sound enough after an examination by a veterinary surgeon, then, although he runs a certain risk, he may with luck get a bargain. It is well, however, to resist the temptation to bid for anything, no matter how good-looking, about which nothing can be ascertained with certainty. The information he can obtain from the owner or groom may be quite accurate, but it may be unreliable, as the buyer's requirements and capabilities may not be the same as the seller's. It is unsafe for an indifferent horseman to rely on what he *sees* of the performance of a hunter or a polo pony, unless he takes into consideration the difference between his skill as a polo player or as a horseman and that of the owner. There is no commoner form of disappointment.

I will conclude with this advice. It takes most people years of practice to learn to judge a horse. Some good judges are capable of taking in its qualities quickly and at first sight; others require long deliberation and perhaps a second inspection. Some are deceived by first impressions, some require to see the horse in the familiar surroundings of their own stables, some like to be alone, others to have a friend with whom to discuss the matter. Some like advice, some do not. The wisest pay liberally for an exhaustive trial. Do not imitate anyone's method of making a purchase—ten to one it is not suitable for you—but decide upon the method that you feel gives you confidence and the most satisfactory results, and stick to it.

Finally, let me repeat that a man's best hunter is the one that enables him to see the most of every kind of hunt in safety and comfort,

and his best polo pony is the one that enables him to play up to, or better than, his handicap, and that gives him the most opportunities of hitting the ball and of combining with the rest of his side.

The Unbroken Horse

So far I have only dealt with buying a horse that is sufficiently advanced to enable it to be tried and ridden. If any of my readers wishes to buy an unbroken three-year-old, so that he may try his hand at breaking him from the beginning, he will have to be a very shrewd and experienced judge of conformation; but without this experience I cannot advocate such a course. If the horse will allow itself to be saddled, mounted, and then just led round the paddock at the walk, even thus there is much information to be gained from his back by noticing how he carries a saddle, and how he uses his shoulders. If possible, get a sight of the sire and dam and an idea of their performances. Study closely the angles and proportions of the bony frame (this is not easy with a fat young horse), and the set-on of the limbs and the head and neck. View the horse from all angles so as to detect any deviation from the normal and any deformity. As the horse is trotted up and down, view him, not only from the back and the front, but from the sides also. Then see him cantered round on a lunge-rein, so that you may study his action at this pace. While we might reasonably forgive a broken, seasoned horse some slight deformity or defect in action, provided the ride and performance pleased us, it is important to be very exacting as regards these points in the unbroken horse; faulty action and crooked limbs will so often cause unsoundness during breaking and after. Then let your veterinary surgeon examine him for unsoundness.

Nevertheless, when you have collected all the information available, examined, tried, and ridden the horse, studied his conformation and action and that of his sire and dam, you will not have before you an animal of perfect make and shape. Faults and defects there will certainly be, and experience alone will guide the buyer in deciding which he can afford to ignore, which are compensated for by excellence in other points, and which are so serious as to prohibit a purchase.

I should like to warn my readers of a risk they run in having palmed off on them a spoiled pony as a "green" one. It has happened to me twice. In one case the pony was caught in a field before my eyes. There was no sign of it ever having been shod, and, as it was as wild as a hawk, I believed the owner when he said it had never "had a strap on it." It was five years old, and the preliminary breaking was suspiciously simple and straightforward, but when we got to stick and ball the fat

was in the fire ; the pony then became completely unmanageable. However, I was spared the necessity of persevering, as he was recognised by another dealer as a well-known rogue whom three or four good horsemen had tried in vain to school.

The other was a mare seven years old, that was described as having been hunted three seasons by a girl. The ride was all one could wish, and, as one would expect at her age, she apparently learned the rudiments very quickly. But in the game she was hopeless. Half-way through a chukker she would cease to play polo, get behind her bit, and make determined efforts to get to the pony shelters. I found out that a weak rider had so sickened her of the game that she had become incorrigible.

I do not wish to go into the matter of price, as this will, of course, fluctuate very much according to the conditions obtaining. If times are good, ponies sell for very much higher prices than they do in hard times, but the would-be schooler of polo ponies must bear in mind that, however careful he may be, and however skilful, he is bound to have a proportion of failures. This is the chief hazard in making polo pony schooling profitable. To the cost of every successful pony has to be added the original price of these failures, their keep during the process of breaking, and the time and trouble spent. Formerly there was a much better market for such failures. There was always a demand for hacks and for trappers. The latter have entirely disappeared from the road, and there are not many of the former wanted.

But there is another side to the picture, and I almost feel inclined to head a chapter "Hints on *Selling* Horses and Ponies," and to tell some extraordinary anecdotes of deals that have come within my notice, but I will content myself with the following few words :

As most people buy horses for their looks, anyone who wishes to dispose of his hunters easily should be very particular as regards this point, and then if he can, without stretching his conscience too far, throw out some veiled hint that the horse is likely to win a point-to-point or has run well in a point-to-point, or that you would not be surprised if he did run well in a point-to-point, the chances of a deal approach almost a certainty. As regards a polo pony, some hint that the animal has exhibited international form is almost a necessity for the average polo player to become interested. The fact that the prospective purchaser is incapable of riding a point-to-point horse in a hunt, or of playing an international polo pony, need not be considered.

But good horses and ponies are scarce nowadays, even the raw material. Not so many are being bred. I therefore advise caution in selling, because the chances of replacing a good horse are few. It is true that there is always a market for a *good* one, but it is the only

kind of horse that is saleable to-day. It was an old saying that there was a horse for every job and a job for every horse, and formerly there was a, more or less, ready market for all and sundry; to-day the export of good young horses and ponies, as well as brood mares, is depleting the available supply. For the above reasons, I suggest that the idea of purchasing three-year-olds to mature into useful saddle-horses should not be dismissed, and that the temptation to sell a promising animal should be resisted by horse-lovers unless they know just where to go for another, as good or better, to take its place.

CHAPTER XV

CRUELTY IN TRAINING AND SPORT

THIS is a subject which is usually approached from one point of view only—that of consideration for the hunted and slain. The cruelties for which ignorance and want of thought are responsible in the sportsman's dealing with the horse also call for comment, as well as a few words of caution. Unfortunately the result to the victim is the same, whether the cause is ignorance or definite cruel intention, so it is the duty of the humane man to know enough to be able to avoid the infliction, inadvertently, of pain and discomfort.

Polo and hunting can be coupled in this connection, for although polo is a game rather than a sport, it can be argued that it is very akin to sport because in the days of its beginning the Manipuris and the other ancient Asiatic tribes, who were the earliest exponents, would use the ponies which they had trained for their hunting expeditions no less than for warlike purposes. So as sport is the image of hunting, and games are the image of war, we can say that polo, although primarily a game, is something of a sport also.

To exert pressure on the reins in excess of what is necessary to stop a horse or to steady and guide him, is cruel, while the violent jerks to which some riders resort because a horse has been pulling or has blundered are deliberately cruel, yet one too often sees a polo player "taking it out of his pony" after the bell has gone because it has annoyed him by failing to stop quickly enough.

There is a rule of polo (made in the interests of humanity) forbidding the use of spurs with rowels, but nevertheless one sometimes sees bleeding sides, showing that this rule has been ignored by both player and umpire. Also one too often sees riders strike their ponies with their polo sticks. These two infringements are not only cruel, but they are inexpedient, a bad example to young players, an unedifying spectacle, and the onlookers are apt to carry away a disagreeable impression.

Hunting folk often take advantage of the keenness which horses display when hounds are running to overtire them and thus bring them home in a state of exhaustion. I am sorry to say that this tendency is more noticeable when they are riding hirelings than when they are

riding their own hunters. I once heard a girl say to the other members of her party who were turning homewards: "I'm not coming yet. I am going to finish the day. I am on a hireling." This was about 2.30, after a heavy morning, and fully an hour after people had changed on to their second horses.

I was once shown a horse by a dealer at Minehead that had been ridden to a standstill the day before by a young man who had hired it. He had found himself, at the end of a long hunt, about thirty miles from home, and, seeing some friends in a motor-car, had allowed himself to be persuaded by them to put the horse into a disused stable at an inn and to avail himself of a lift home. He had reported the matter to the owner at 8.30 that evening, and, although he could remember the name of the inn, he could not remember the name of the village. A search was instituted the next morning, and the horse was located towards eleven o'clock. It had not been watered or fed, the bridle had not been removed, nor had the girth even been slackened. The horse never completely recovered and was never any good after. This may possibly be an extreme case, but in the annals of every hunt there are only too many cases of horses, overfaced and overridden, sometimes even to death.

The cruelties that are practised to overcome the resistance of a rebellious horse also call for comment. The beatings that fall to the lot of the refuser, and the means used to make a reluctant horse rein back, are often most violent, and weals in the one case and bleeding and bruised mouths in the other, are the result. Both are entirely unnecessary if proper methods are employed.

Sore backs, bruised mouths and girth galls are too obvious to need writing about, but when it is a case of missing a day's hunting or a polo match to give a back or a mouth a few extra days to recover, people are apt not to err on the humane side.

Horse-owners should never leave ponies, wintering in the open, to the tender mercies of farmers without very frequent periodical inspection. I have seen deplorable cases of neglect and half-starved, debilitated sufferers as the result.

As an instance of the depth of ignorance that may prevail regarding what is cruel and what is not cruel, the following story has the merit of being true.

A man I know was out hunting on the first horse he ever owned. The horse was unclipped and had a coat like a bear, with the result that it was dripping with sweat. A friend said to him, "Why don't you clip that horse?" and he replied: "I wouldn't do anything so cruel." The story was told to me a few minutes afterwards, so when I came across him I said: "Don't you think it's very cruel not to clip

that horse?" I saw that he was very puzzled, but he evidently sought the light, because next time he was out his horse was clipped.

As regards the other aspect of the case—cruelty to the hunted—my ideas were embodied in an article written at the time of a recent controversy, and I cannot do better than to give it verbatim.

"The controversialists can be summed up as follows: On the one hand we are harangued by people who have not given the subject unprejudiced thought, and on the other hand by sporting enthusiasts who try to persuade us that hunting is not cruel. Although very fond of hunting, I try to look at matters with an unbiassed mind.

"In olden times man had to live by his prowess rather than by his wits; he had to hunt wild animals for the pot, to exterminate marauding beasts, and to defend himself from theft by fighting. We have gradually become civilised, and now we have no need to hunt to feed ourselves, while the law protects our property. Still, our primitive instincts remain, and we can satisfy them by playing games which are the image of warfare, and by the field sports, hunting, fishing, and shooting, which are a relic of the days when the instinct of hunting was the instinct of self-preservation.

"With regard to the cruelty of our field sports, man has assumed, rightly or wrongly, an ascendancy over the lower animals; this is even more obvious in the case of our domestic animals, as a visit to the abattoirs will prove; and further, why should he assume that it is right for him to practise horrible mutilations on the males from which he does not wish to breed? Why, otherwise, should he kill a cow's calf and steal her milk? Man has made for himself the necessity of eating flesh, and he can perfectly well live without drinking milk. Cruel as hunting, fishing, and shooting are, we do at least let our quarry exercise his natural instincts, and in all cases he is given a chance to escape. Everybody, without exception, will find, on examining his daily life, that he uses scores of things that involve cruelty to some animal; but we find that everybody draws the line at a different place and finds excuses for his weaknesses by saying such things as 'Fishes are cold-blooded and do not feel,' or 'Hunting is a necessity to improve the breed of horses for war.' Even the most tender-hearted woman will not refuse to wear a fur coat, and what is more cruel than the trapping of fur-bearing animals? But Nature herself is cruel; throughout Nature the strong prey on the weak, and we all of us die in the end in some more or less painful way; we are hunted by hunger and disease, and our pleasures, after all, are merely a matter of contrast.

"When we consider the pros and cons of sport, we must leave the element of cruelty out. What we have to consider is whether or not participation in it is anti-social—that is to say, a public nuisance—and

this should be the basis of consideration. I personally think that the benefits of field sports outweigh the disabilities, and my reasons for thinking so are these :

"In the first place, one of the arguments of the enemies of sport is that an immense amount of money is spent on it every year. But if the people who spend this money do not spend it on sport they will spend it on some other form of enjoyment, and surely it is only sport which keeps wealthy people in this country during our horrible winter weather ; money spent on sport in the British Isles does the country more good than money spent on the Riviera or in Switzerland, and the question of the employment of labour and the damage to crops is part of the same question.

"Sport has a very important side in its effect on us physically and mentally. What a tame and uninspiring creature man would be with all his primitive instincts suppressed ! How very dull the daily round would be if we had not our favourite relaxations to look forward to ! Why should the cruelty of sport be attacked while the brutality of games such as football and boxing is not commented on? And finally, does anyone believe that we should maintain our best national characteristics if we removed the chief cause of them by abolishing sport?"

SWALLOWING AS GOSPEL ALL THAT HIS GROOM TELLS HIM.

CHAPTER XVI

"THE EYE OF THE MASTER"

THERE is an old Greek proverb to the following effect: "The eye of the master makes the horse fat," and I wonder if the present-day horseman realises how many other things the eye of the master can do, or, rather, for how many disasters, minor misfortunes, ailments, and mishaps the absence of the master's eye is responsible. This affords much food for reflection, more to-day than ever before.

With the disappearance of the horse as a means of locomotion, the private stable has also gone. Nowadays, unless there is hunting or polo, the coach-house is a garage and the stable is empty. The disappearance of the harness horse and hack has also had the result of reducing the supply of satisfactory and experienced grooms, and there are fewer young men in the stable learning the job and fewer stables to learn it in. So there is more need of the master's eye than ever before, for the horse-owner has in many cases to train his groom from nearly the beginning. As a matter of fact, the writer knows that this mutual study can be a very effective combination between master and man, and is often preferable to the former being faced with the choice of swallowing as gospel all that his groom tells him, or embarking upon an unpleasant and unending struggle against the prejudices and superstitions of an ancient retainer.

There is another point. If one is to become an efficient horse-master, the temptations to do other and simpler things, rather than to complicate life with a stable, must be overcome, because, look at it how one will, to embark with any hope of success on even a modest stud is a trying and worrying affair. Dancing is now an institution instead of an occasional recreation, and the late hours, bad air, and indiscretions of diet incidental to dancing are not a good training for field sports. Then there are motoring, the cinematograph, golf, and tennis all taking up time, thought, and money.

No matter how experienced and conscientious may be the groom, he will be, at best, a man of little education, which means little reasoning power or ability to make deductions and draw conclusions. But, on the other hand, he is often a man of far keener observation than his

master, having fewer distractions, and, because the mentality of the animals in his charge is not so far removed from his own, he is in greater sympathy with them, and of this trait great use can be made. He is better able to notice the slight deviation from normal health which is so often the forerunner of serious disease. If, therefore, such a groom can be trained to have confidence in his powers of observation and to report fearlessly the smallest sign of trouble, without waiting for developments, a valuable co-operation will have been established. It is easier to notice trifles than to appreciate their significance. I have been keenly interested in horses for forty years and have made a study of them, but until recently I have always found myself inclined to remember small details only after more serious results have reminded me that, although I had perceived the onset of the evil, I had failed to take steps to counter it.

A friend of mine, who had a very confidential and trustworthy polo pony, told me that it had started to cow-kick at him as he mounted. He was in my yard at the time, and I had one of my ponies brought out, and asked him to show me how he mounted. I noticed that he stood slightly in rear of the stirrup, that in mounting he held the saddle rather over to the off side and leaned his right elbow on the pony's back. I marked the spot where his elbow had rested, and told him to examine his pony for a sore place just there. He telephoned to say he could find no trace of anything, although the pony flinched when touched. Two days afterwards a warble appeared there, but before that, when he was careful not to touch the pony with his elbow in mounting, it ceased to kick and stood perfectly still.

The master must so train his eye that he can ascertain in a moment that his horse is correctly saddled and bridled before he mounts. This should be done unostentatiously. Two fingers test the tightness of the girth; a glance is enough to satisfy himself regarding bit, throat-lash, and curb-chain. A polo groom will usually have the standing martingale too long, and this can be verified by taking it in the left hand near the nose-band and pulling it tight upwards from the girth (Fig. 25). This same unostentation should be the key-note when examining a horse to see if he is well groomed, a closer examination being called for if the general appearance of the horse leads one to suspect neglect. My experience tells me that a conscientious civilian groom would resent the minute examination to which horse and saddlery are subjected in the Army, especially if carried out regularly, but between this and the *laissez-aller* of the many horse-owners there is a world of difference.

It is important to remember that a horse's powers of expression are limited, or at all events are so obscure and subtle that they are invisible to anyone but the closest observer, one who has an intimate knowledge

of horses generally and who has had the particular horse in question under his care. This is the reason why it is so important to have a trained observer in charge of a horse, one who will report regardless of the fact that he may be blamed. Therefore the veterinary surgeon who is called in to treat a suffering horse should question the animal's attendant very closely as to any change in appearance and expression from normal health, and should be able to rely on the information obtained. A careful, observant groom will sometimes report: "I knew he was amiss as soon as I opened the box door this morning."

During the war the writer made a great point of teaching this to the drivers and young officers he had for training, and in their zeal the most delightful reports would be forthcoming. Here is a typical one. Wishing to report his horse was not feeding, a recruit driver delivered himself of the following: "Please, sergeant, my horse won't pick his seed." Whether or not inquiry would have elicited the fact that canaries were the only animals that had hitherto come under his care, I know not. Another, but two weeks under training, asked by the inspecting general what quantity of oats his horses were getting, replied: "Oh, thousands and thousands." These anecdotes show the right spirit, even if the phraseology leaves something to be desired from a horsy point of view.

The importance of close observation and a prompt report is emphasised when the owner firmly believes, as I do, that all so-called accidents are preventable. They can all be put down to inattention, faulty gear, bad stable management, or bad riding. I will make two exceptions to this; a slip up on tarmac or the picking up of a nail may be entirely unpreventable, but, looking back at a large number and variety of mishaps and diseases, I must come to the decision that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the fault lies with the owner, groom, or both.

The value of the master's eye is well shown with animals at grass, hunters in summer, and still more so with polo ponies in winter. If they are looked at every day, and if, once a month, legs are handled and feet dressed, they will invariably do well. Should this daily and monthly examination be omitted, or if notice is not taken of every adverse sign, the chances are that there will be ailments, trifling if the animal is put under treatment early, otherwise serious.

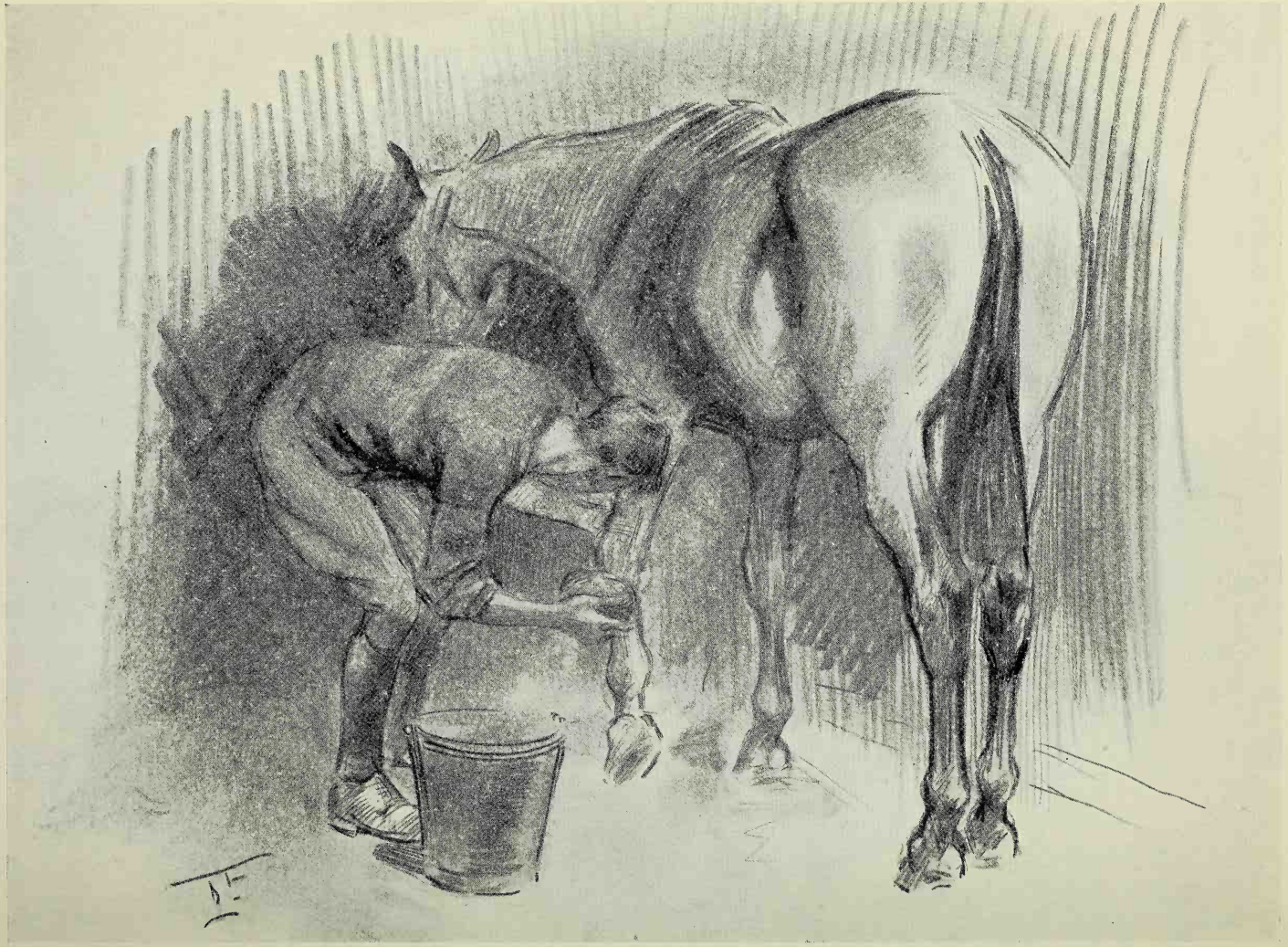
Many of us learned during the war, when of necessity forage was short, on how little a horse could be kept reasonably fit and looking well. In spite of this lesson, I think most hunters and polo ponies are still overfed, a very high diet often necessitating more work and exercise than the animal's legs can stand, or else their appearance on

the polo-ground or in the hunting-field, vicious and unmanageable.* I always collect information on this, as well as other points connected with stable management, wherever I see the chance, and I am forced to the conclusion that accidents and ailments occur in the direct ratio to the oats consumed. To illustrate this we can take, on the one hand, a rich man's stable with no sort of control on the forage bills, and on the other a stable full of hirelings. At the end of a hunting season it would be safe to wager that the hirelings will have hunted half as many days again, had longer days, and eaten three-quarters of the amount of oats. The answer to this may be that the former keep their condition, whereas the latter often look woefully thin. It is true that often this is the case, but I have sometimes seen the conditions reversed, so I cannot accept it as a universal rule, and, moreover, the legs of the poorer man's horse will be finer.

Examination and weighing of forage (which, by the way, should never be ordered by the groom) is another matter the master should insist on. It is what a business man has to do regarding goods delivered, and it is just as important with regard to forage. The owner should make his own bargain for forage. It is not reasonable to expect his groom to get anything but the worst of a bargain with a dealer or farmer intent on selling his wares at the highest price.

The individual diet of each horse is the hardest thing for the master to supervise; I am not sure if it is not impossible. It requires someone in much closer touch with the animal than he can possibly be, and that someone must be the sympathetic observer mentioned early in the chapter. When I was young and learning the rudiments of horsemanship (and I bought my first horse nearly thirty-five years ago), I came to the conclusion that a groom was either a good feeder or he was not, that he did not know why he was a good feeder or why he was not, and that, although he could tell you how he fed a certain horse, he was not capable of imparting his general knowledge. My later experience has not caused me to modify my opinion, and I still rely on my groom to diet each horse according to its needs and idiosyncrasies. I now, however, lay down these rules. All oats must be lightly crushed. The quantity of oats must be regulated *day by day* and varied according to the amount of work a horse is doing. If a horse inadvertently gets above himself, he is to be subdued by work in long reins rather than by long roadwork with the attendant risks and with a weight on his

* A veterinary surgeon, with a very large town and country practice, tells me that his professional duties to the horses under his charge has become much simpler since the war, and that the difficult and complicated cases are fewer. Further, in the big stables which he looks after by contract, a much healthier lot of animals is the rule. He gives as the reason that their war experience has taught the horse-keepers that lighter feeding—*i.e.*, fewer oats—suffices to keep horses fit and well.



THE STABLEMAN NEVER KNOWS WHEN HIS WORK IS DONE.

back. But I must add this: the long-rein driving must be learned and practised correctly. I have one more point to emphasise before I leave the subject of diet. The eye of the master should know the signs of worms, and he should also be capable of examining a horse's molars if necessary.

Stable gear should be personally examined from time to time, and it should not be left to the groom to decide whether repair or renewal is necessary. It is the owner's purse that is in question and the owner's neck that is in jeopardy, and it is only fair that this decision should be left to him. It is hardly necessary to point out that the articles which should most often come in for inspection are girths (especially those of web, which is liable to rot), stirrup leathers (especially when continually used in the same hole), reins, the stitching on bridles, and the padding and lining of saddles. I have been amazed when judging "turn out" at polo gymkhanas to see the badly fitting saddles and bridles, martingales of useless length, and the unserviceable condition of the gear generally. I wonder how many of the spectators noticed that once in an international polo match one of the players rode on for a chukker with a bearing-rein on his pony. "Hardly an international pony requiring a bearing-rein," said a well-known player I was sitting with. But where had been the eye of the master? The rein broke as soon as the ball was thrown in, and during the player's absence to change his pony the opponents scored a goal.

Shoeing is also a matter that requires close attention. It should be insisted upon that a shoeing-book be kept, similar to the one in use in the Army. The eye of the master should be trained so that he knows whether a horse is shod well or badly for his particular action and style of going. Whether a shoe has been on long enough, whether it requires removing or replacing, is a point on which he should be capable of expressing a definite opinion, otherwise he runs the risk of being overborne and perhaps browbeaten by the blacksmith. If there is a suspicion that a horse is lame from a mishap in shoeing, I like to be present myself when each nail is drawn, the shoe removed, and the foot examined, as it is difficult to get the smith to admit any sign of a pricked foot or too tight a shoe.

There is a point of stable routine on which I differ from most horse-owners and most textbooks. I am not in favour of exercising horses, certainly in midwinter, before breakfast. I had to work myself before breakfast for many years in the old days when factories started at six a.m., and I learned to distrust the quality of work produced in this "first quarter" of the day, men not being alert or at their best. The time before breakfast is best spent in cleaning out loose-boxes and stalls and in grooming; then, when men and horses are fed and the

first chill is off the morning, they will make a better job of their exercising. In the summer, however, it is of advantage to get ponies out before the heat of the day.

There is another item of stable routine of the utmost importance, and one which admits of no substitute for the eye of the master. Every morning, after hunting or polo, every horse or pony that has been used the previous day must be stripped, his back examined, and he must be jogged out in hand as a test of soundness, and every leg must be handled by him personally. This is the only way he can be certain that an injury is put under treatment at the earliest possible moment, unless, indeed, twelve hours have been already saved by dealing with an injury that was so obvious as to manifest itself the day before.

For this co-operation between master and man there must be very complete, mutual, and friendly relations. There should be no difficulty about it, and there need be no loss of dignity on either side. A groom should not be afraid to express his opinion, if it is a considered one and not just a defence or an attempt at concealment. The master, on his part, must remember that he is not dealing with an educated man, nor, indeed, is he paying him a wage which will command anything very intellectual in the labour market; but if he tries to get the best out of him by confidence and, above all, by a constant show of interest, he will achieve the best result. A good and conscientious groom will welcome a visit from his employer at any time, and if he does not there is something wrong with one or both.

A groom's life is a trying one. The horse is a very helpless creature, entirely dependent on man, and requires constant attention; the stableman's hours are necessarily very elastic, so he never knows when his work is over. It must also be borne in mind that he has a very valuable and perishable charge, and is employed solely to minister to his employer's enjoyment, and he is therefore worthy of much consideration and encouragement. The human element is, however, present even with the most experienced and conscientious of stablemen, and to err is human. It is wise always to let it be known that an error has been noticed; if the fault is of rare occurrence, this should be enough, but there are occasions when the master's displeasure should be visited on the servant with no uncertain hand, and for this the eye of the master should be so trained as to give him the complete confidence of the expert.

CHAPTER XVII

HORSY TERMS NOT GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD

UNFORTUNATELY the terms used in horsy language, far from being self-explanatory, are apt to be misleading. I do not suggest an amended vocabulary, as it is impossible to devise one in which the words would carry with them their own explanation, but considered definitions of the less obvious expressions in current use by horsemen are called for.

A GOOD SEAT.—To have attained this a rider must not only be able to stick on a rough, refractory, or shying horse, but he must throughout be able to keep his weight in the place he wishes, and to use the aids effectively. He must also be so secure that he can use his legs and hands up to the moment that a horse "takes off" at a jump, and, while still pressing his legs, leave the mouth absolutely alone until the horse has landed with all his four feet and is moving on. He must further be able to sit so that he does not give any unintended indication with leg or hand to a horse in danger of falling. In no circumstances must the heels and hands take any part in obtaining this security. A good seat can only be attained by long practice, preferably under a competent teacher, who will see that his pupil adopts the conventional position, attitude, and poise, modified by his particular make and shape.

The natural seat is that of a naked man on a bare-backed horse (Fig. 67). In Fig. 68 he has modified this seat by bending his knees slightly and by lowering the heel; the first is to take advantage of the support provided by a strap passed over the lowest point on a horse's back—viz., the only place where it would stay. This strap would have to hang vertically in order to furnish the best support, so that the natural seat must be varied by this bending of the knee. In order to use these strap supports, they must have loops or stirrups at the ends, through which the rider places his feet, and, to enable the rider to keep them on his feet and to make full use of them, he must bend his ankle—*i.e.*, lower his heel. This is the evolution of the seat on horseback, and this strap, probably with a skin thrown over the horse's back in addition, is the embryo saddle. It does not require much imagination to picture the stages through which the modern saddle has passed to reach its present perfection. The guiding principles have been safety to the rider, his comfort, that of the horse, and lightness. Fig. 69 shows the same rider, but with saddle.

It serves no useful purpose to set down rules in a book. The beginner has no idea whether he is following these rules or not, and unless there is someone to correct him constantly he will contract bad habits and never have either a firm or an elegant seat, and one may almost say that these terms are synonymous. Something can be learnt by imitation, and convenient shop windows as he rides through villages will show a rider by his reflection how he is sitting. There is always a large mirror in well-equipped riding-schools, in which pupils can see themselves as they ride past. It serves the dual purpose of confirming the rude remarks passed on their appearance by their teacher, and may prevent them showing themselves in public before they have attained some slight proficiency. There is much drudgery entailed in the early lessons until one begins to feel secure, and there is nothing for it but

Fig. 67.

The Natural Seat.

Fig. 68.

The Natural Seat Modified.

Fig. 69.

The Natural Seat with Saddle.

to persevere. The beginner will wonder how he can ever become proficient; as he becomes proficient he will wonder how he could have been so inept at first, so there is no need to be discouraged.

It is often debated at what age boys and girls should begin to ride in order to acquire a good seat. I am sure all fine horsemen and women have begun quite young. Provided they are strong, well grown, and *if a suitable narrow pony is procured*, there is no reason why children should not begin when they are six or seven. A donkey is not a bad thing to start on, although it is apt to give wrong ideas of the sensibility of their mounts. The early lessons should be of the simplest, and then, when the pupil is ten or twelve years old, proper riding instruction by a competent teacher should begin. From this time onward their ponies should be big enough for a light man to ride occasionally, as otherwise they learn tricks, owing to the difficulty of keeping them exercised and mastered.

It fell to my lot during the war to have through my hands a great

number of recruit drivers and officers. They came to us at all ages from eighteen or nineteen upwards, and the average time we kept them under training was about four to five months. While many seemed to fall naturally into an easy seat owing to their suitable build, I doubt whether any would become horsemen. Some of the boys from Public Schools, who had ridden all their lives, shaped the best, *when once they could be made to realise that they did not know everything about riding*. I think, however, that they had a bad time of it because they were not popular with either the instructors or their fellows, as they were rather given to being contemptuous of the rule-of-thumb methods of the former and the early efforts of the latter. When the class was ready for passing out, the beginners and those of longer experience were, to the casual observer, a wonderfully even lot, but an experienced eye could separate them without difficulty.

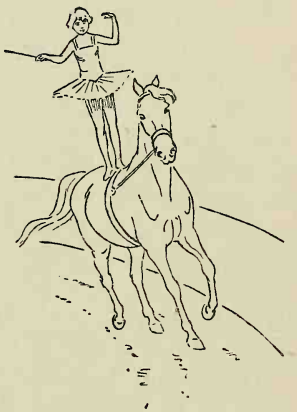


Fig. 70.

Balance.

People who take to horses for the first time when they are grown up—say eighteen upwards—never acquire a good seat or, indeed, the other essentials for fine horsemanship, but by a merciful dispensation of Providence they never know just what they have missed, or, indeed, that they have missed anything.

It is said that one keeps one's seat by "balance" and not by "grip." This requires some explanation. If the axis of our body always remained in the same line as the axis of the horse, our weight when going straight forward, and centrifugal force when turning, would be sufficient to keep us in the saddle; any slight deviation from this position necessitates grip with one leg (thigh and knee) slightly more than the other, in order to regain our position in the vertical. This, with practice, becomes automatic, and then the more we can co-ordinate the muscles of the right and left legs so that one does not overpower the other, the less exertion it will require to keep ourselves erect in the middle of the saddle. When this exertion has been reduced to a minimum it is "balance."

Centrifugal force, to which I allude, will be better understood if we take as an instance the circus rider standing on her horse which is cantering round the ring (Fig. 70). The horse must lean towards the inside to counteract centrifugal force, and the rider has also to incline to the inside for the same reason; therefore her axis and that of the horse remain in the same line. This is balance with no more grip

than can be obtained by the rider's feet assisted by rosin, with which the horse's back is always sprinkled for these bareback feats. If she stood in a position perpendicular to the ground, centrifugal force would cause her to fall off to the outside of the ring, just as if she leant over too much, gravity—that is, her weight—would cause her to fall to the inside.

I have purposely ignored the rider's displacement forwards or backwards. Balance in these directions (although important for a good seat) is not so easily lost, and therefore does not play such an important part in *security* of seat as the balance to counteract lateral displacement.

If my readers wish for a rule to guide them as to the position of the rider's body with regard to his poise forwards and backwards, here is one. Always keep the body as nearly as possible at right angles to the ground (if anything slightly forward), and the leg (knee to heel) bent slightly back beyond the vertical with the heel slightly depressed. Then, as the horse rises at a jump, the rider's chest will have to approach the horse's neck, and, during the descent, on landing his shoulders will have to approach the horse's loins. I purposely avoid using the words "lean forward" and "lean back," as they are apt to create a wrong impression, because the important point to bear in mind is the position of the body with regard to the perpendicular. It will be noticed that, in instantaneous photographs of riders jumping, those who have preserved this position give the most secure and graceful impression.

If the forward seat is adopted for landing over a fence, the reader is warned that it is not possible from this position to get his weight back to save himself, or to ease the fore-hand of a horse that has pecked or stumbled, while it *is* possible to get the weight forward from the position recommended above, to give a horse a chance to recover from a flounder with his hind legs.

At a jump, or if a horse makes unexpected movements (especially if he deviates from the straight, starts forward, or stops), it will be necessary to grip. The *constant* grip, however, should be so light that even after the longest day in the saddle, with a score of jumps, no matter how tired one may be, and however stiff one may become, the adductors, or gripping muscles, should not be noticeably affected.

I have dwelt here at some length on this subject, as I shall not refer to it again. It hardly comes within the scope of this book, except in so far as without a good seat there can be no control, and breaking and schooling become impossible.

AIDS are the means at the disposal of the rider to convey his wishes to the horse. The hands acting on the bit and neck through the reins, pressure of the legs from knee to heel (leading to the spur if necessary)—these are the aids. The whip and the voice are supplementary aids,

used educationally, and they should be discarded as far as possible as the horse's training progresses.

HANDS.—This is an expression which is often misunderstood, many riders being under the impression that by the hands alone can the horse be guided and efficiently controlled. By "hands" is meant the communication between rider and horse, in so far as the reins are concerned. But we should never use one set of aids without the others. We should never act on the bit without bringing the reins also to bear on the neck whenever possible, and never without pressure of the legs. What is generally meant by "good hands" is the power of the rider to act on the reins correctly and effectively and with a minimum force. A man with bad hands exerts power in excess of what is necessary to convey his wishes to the horse, and thereby inflicts pain, confuses him, and makes him restless and unruly.

The first essential for good hands is a firm seat, whereby a rider avoids giving *unintentional* indications. The rider with a loose seat is moved this way and that, and in consequence the horse receives meaningless pulls with the reins and leg pressure. The result is confusion. Too strong a use of one rein will necessitate a stronger use of the other, and then this violent use of the reins forces the legs. Thus we get one hand overpowering the other, and the hands forcing the legs, which will again react on the hands.

If the hands are used without the legs, we are acting on the fore-hand alone, and the hind part is receiving no indication. This is not horse-breaking, and can hardly be called riding.

The second essential of good hands is the conviction that the reins and bit, far from being instruments of force, are delicate instruments of communication between the rider's brain and that of the horse.

It is sometimes said that men are born with good hands, and it is also said that good hands cannot be acquired. These are both to a large extent fallacies. It is as necessary for a man to learn and practise the use of the aids conjointly and correctly as it is for the violinist to learn and practise to finger and bow co-ordinately and correctly. Every art has its technique, which has to be acquired by precept, application, and practice. Whether the violinist who has learnt the technique of his instrument will ever become an artist is another matter, and whether the man who has learnt and practised the use of the "aids" will ever become a fine horseman is also uncertain, but he will be a rider of sorts, while without this tuition and practice, however enthusiastic he may be, there is little hope of him even reaching mediocrity.

Women are said to have better hands than men. This is not correct. When they ride side-saddle it is true that their seat is secure and independent of the reins, and if they have to do without leg pressure,

the entire absence of it is probably better than the confusion arising from haphazard indications; also they are not so strong and rough, so their horses seem to go very kindly with them; but they must have well-broken horses, for there is no real control from a side-saddle over an imperfectly broken animal.

There is no time in a rider's career when he can say that he has reached finality in any department of riding and horsemanship, and "hands" are no exception. He can always, to quote Fillis, be "refining his aids." Most horsemen can look back with great interest and make a comparison between the comparatively delicate use of the aids to which they have attained and their crude early efforts.

Leg, Heel, and Spur.—When we talk of "leg" we refer to that part of the leg below the knee. With some horses, pressure with the leg is sufficient to obtain prompt response; with others one has to resort to the heel or to the spur, either with or without rowels. The leg should not be drawn back farther than is necessary for the heel to clear the girth, the only spot for its effective application. The toe should be slightly turned out, and the heel or spur driven at right angles into the horse's side.

Dropping the Hand.—This is simply slackening the reins. The hand should be dropped (1) as part of the reward we give to a horse for having learned a lesson, (2) also as he takes off at a jump, (3) when we wish to free his head to enable him to recover from a stumble, (4) if he shows a disposition to rear, and (5) when he is walking freely and quietly.

Behind the Bit.—A horse is behind the bit when, by bending his neck, opening his mouth, or both, he deliberately slackens the reins and thereby cuts the communication between his mouth and the rider's hand. Until we can force him forward by vigorous use of the legs, till he again takes hold of the bit, we are unable to use the reins. In this fault the horse's hind legs have a tendency to be too far underneath him.

Being behind the bit is a very bad fault, and until it is eradicated no breaking can proceed and no lesson should be attempted. It is something quite different from going with a slack rein, which is not a deliberate defence on the part of the horse, for in this case the horse is so well trained that, while doing his best, he remains under control and waits with full attention for indications from his rider. The horse behind his bit, far from doing his best, slackens his pace, prances, half rears, or swings his quarters to one side or the other. Very vigorous use of the legs is necessary when a horse has a tendency to this defence.

Pulling.—This is the opposite to being "behind the bit." By trying

to extend the neck and lower the head, the horse bears on the bit and rider's hand, and tries to increase his pace. Until we can bring his head and neck into the correct position, the rein is the only aid we can use; leg pressure until we have his head correctly placed would only increase the trouble. In this fault the hind legs have a tendency to be too far out behind the horse. A horse is hardly ever a puller as long as his head and neck are in the correct position (see Direct Flexion), for he is controllable as long as the reins act on the bars of the mouth. If he so manœuvres his head and neck that the bit bears on the corners of the mouth, he will be able to pull.

THE TWO FLEXIONS, DIRECT AND LATERAL.—The direct flexion is the correct position of the head, neck, and jaw, while the horse is moving forward in a straight line, for him to be completely balanced and under control. The rider must be able to obtain it at will, and as an exercise it has the effect of permanently improving the horse's balance and carriage. It is of such importance that until it can be obtained at will the horse will not be broken. The direct flexion is the key to breaking.* Any deviation from the straight by any part of the horse destroys the direct flexion. (N.B.—No attempt should be made to obtain the direct flexion while the horse is stationary.) This carriage of the head is not always appreciated by hunting men. Polo players, however, know its value well, as without it no pony (and for the matter of that no hunter either) can reach top class. The head must be carried high, and there must be no bend of the neck except just behind the poll. The bend should be just enough to bring the face to an angle of thirty-five degrees to the vertical, and the jaw should be slightly relaxed (Figs. 58, 59, and 60). If the horse presses against one or the other of the rider's legs, or crosses his jaws, and, above all, if he gets behind his bit, he escapes the direct flexion, which, if correct, insures the weight being distributed with a slight preponderance on the hind legs, and the horse being in a position to make any movement that the rider wishes.

The direct flexion should not be attempted at the more extended paces, although a horse should always carry his head well. We could not, for instance, expect a horse to perform it at the long striding walk, the extended trot, or the gallop. But if we wish to change to the "school walk," the well-balanced trot, or the canter, these movements should be performed with the head and neck carried at the direct flexion. Thus, if we were galloping fast with hounds, and we wished to take hold of our horse to balance him for the approach to a jump, this balance or

* Other terms such as "getting the horse in hand," "collecting," "balancing," "gathering," "bridling," and "nagging," mean the same thing and the direct flexion correctly executed embraces them all.

collection would take the form of the direct flexion. Again, if we were galloping fast in a straightforward run at polo, and wished to stop or to do a sharp turn, the direct flexion would have to be adopted first.

The other flexion, the lateral flexion, is a variation from this. It is also a bend at the poll. The head, still held high at the direct flexion, instead of being straight to the front, now bends from the poll to the

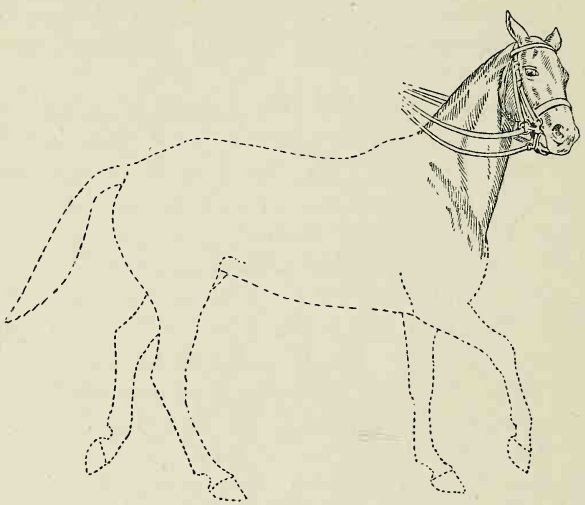


FIG. 71.

Direct and Lateral Flexions.

direction in which we wish to turn, with the muzzle leading slightly. This will insure a horse initiating the movement with his head (see Fig. 71).

To sum up, all straightforward changes of speed and stops must be done from the direct flexion, and for movements to one side or the other lateral flexion must be made in addition.

BRIDLE WISE.—This is an expression which should be adopted in place of the more cumbersome phraseology in general use. A horse is bridle-wise when he can be guided by the pressure of the reins on the side of the neck. The preparation for this is "diagonal equitation." When a horse is bridle-wise it is important to bear in mind that the rein on the *opposite* side to which we wish him to turn is tightened, and the rein on the side *towards* which we wish him to turn is loosened. This is the reverse of the simple guiding which a "green" horse receives in his preliminary breaking. To have a horse bridle wise is the ultimate object of the breaker.

Bars of the Mouth.—These are the toothless spaces between the incisors and the molars of the bottom jaw. The bits lie across them, and if the head and neck are correctly carried and the jaw slightly relaxed, the snaffle-reins will pull nearly at right angles to the bars.

Horizontal Equilibrium.—A term seldom used. It is, nevertheless, important. I borrow it from "Riding and Breaking," by James Fillis. It exists when the horizontal axis of the horse is parallel to the ground, and it is lost usually in pulling up (1) when the horse lowers his head and extends his fore legs (Fig. 73), (2) when the horse unduly raises his head, lowers his croup, and appears to be about to sit down (Fig. 74), (3) in jumping when a horse gets too close to an upright jump or when failing to cover enough ground he makes too steep a descent. In case number one there is a tendency to make long slide marks on grass

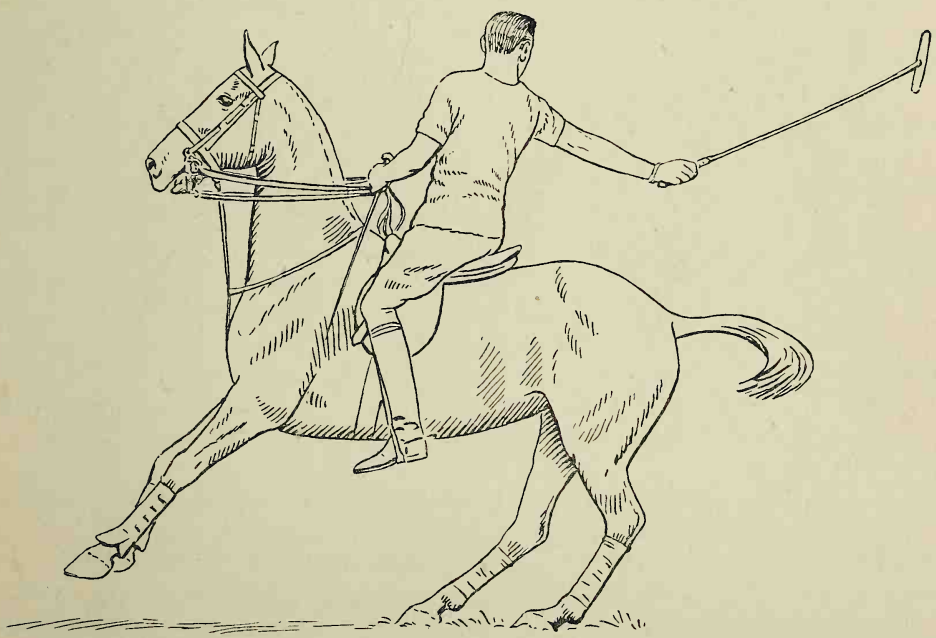


Fig. 72.

Horizontal Equilibrium.

with the fore feet, and in case number two with his hind feet. In pulling up, when horizontal equilibrium has been preserved (Fig. 72), soft ground will show a series of more or less deep indentations made by hind and fore feet alternately. This last is the correct, safe, and

FIG. 73.
Too much weight on fore-hand.

FIG. 74.
Too much weight on hindquarters.

Horizontal Equilibrium Lost.

smooth way to pull up. Horizontal equilibrium, even in jumping, should be preserved as far as possible.

THE PASSAGE is a movement in which the horse gains ground in two directions at once—forwards and to one side. The fore and hind legs must cross in front of each other, never behind each other or against each other, and the horse must not move directly sideways. It is only necessary to teach a hunter to passage at a walk, but the polo pony should be taught to do so at the trot and canter also.

LEADING CORRECTLY.—In cantering or galloping, a horse should lead with the hind and fore legs on the same side. In turning he should lead with the fore and hind legs on the side to which he is turning; if he does not he is said to be "cantering falsely." If he leads with one fore leg and the opposite hind leg he is "disunited." The sound, unbroken horse, galloping loose, leads correctly and changes when he turns. Every four-footed beast does the same, even pigs, and it is due to the restraint of the bit in the horse's mouth or to bad riding and breaking that horses learn to canter falsely or disunited.

SHYING.—The movement of a horse away from an object, noise, or smell in distaste, or fear, real or simulated.

NAPPY.—A term to describe a cunningly rebellious horse. It is "vice" acquired through mismanagement, the horse having at some time or other got the better of his rider and so found a way of defeating him. A horse that is nappy will deceive his rider by apparent docility up to the last second, and, having thus established confidence, will perform some sudden act of rebellion. The following are two common examples:

1. Stopping suddenly and wheeling round. This usually happens when proceeding away from the stables.
2. Making a sudden effort to reach the gate leading towards home, or the place where other horses are standing.

JIBBING.—This differs from napping in that it is passive resistance, the horse refusing to move at all and often remaining stationary in spite of whip and spur. Here there is always mismanagement, and it is probably due to one of the following causes:

1. The horse having lost his temper through not understanding the rider's indications.
2. Having been asked to do something too often.
3. Having been asked to perform some exercise for which he was unsuited by conformation, or which he does not understand.
4. Through pain from some sore or unsoundness.

A GOOD MOUTH is one that retains its sensibility to the indications of the rider's hand, conveyed through the reins and bit. A light mouth is one that requires slight pressure for the rider to convey an impression; a hard mouth is one that requires strong pressure. A horse is said to have a "bad" mouth when it is not possible to predict how it will interpret the indications of the bit. It is assumed in the above definition that the horse is suitably bitted (see "Bitting"), and is not suffering from any sore, bruise, or unsoundness. Further, it cannot be ascertained whether a mouth is light or hard or whether it is bad until every humane bit has been tried (see "Bitting") and unless the head and neck can be brought into the correct position (see "Direct Flexion"). Excluding

unsuitable bitting and incorrect flexion, the most usual cause of a bad mouth is curling up the tongue, hanging it out of the mouth, and, worst of all, getting it over the bit. A mouth will never be good as long as a horse practises any of the above (see "Bitting").

A mouth may be temporarily bad owing to a sore on the lips or to bruised bars. Indeed, a sore place anywhere on its body may so take up a horse's attention and upset his temper as to make him unmanageable and so turn a good mouth into a bad one, either temporarily or permanently. A mouth may be too light or too insensitive for any bit to control, in either of which cases it will also be a bad mouth. In the former a horse will have a great tendency to get "behind the bit," and in the latter he will be a "puller." A horse may have a good mouth when in condition and well exercised, and a bad mouth when soft or overfresh.

Similarly a horse may lose its mouth through fatigue, but in this case it is usually due to the carriage of the head and neck becoming faulty—*i.e.*, avoiding the direct flexion.

Star-gazing.—When a horse raises his neck and head until the face is horizontal, it relieves the bars of its mouth from pressure of the bit; the pull of the reins is then along the line of the mouth and on the corners of the lips. This is "star-gazing." A horse is often quite uncontrollable in this position, and anyway the mouth can never be good. There is a tendency for any horse to adopt this position when suddenly and violently checked. This is the reason why polo ponies are always fitted with a standing martingale as a preventative. Confirmed star-gazing is usually due to faulty conformation, but with good conformation a young horse can be brought from star-gazing to a very beautiful carriage of the head and neck by skilful use of the curb and legs. As a tendency to star-gazing can be counteracted by means of a curb and a standing martingale, it is not so bad a fault as being overbent or having the bend of the neck too far back.

The reverse of star-gazing is for the horse's neck to be overbent, his face thereby being beyond the vertical, the direction of the pull of the snaffle-rein with regard to the bars will also be wrong (Fig. 61). It is a particularly bad fault, and I know of no bit or contrivance other than the bearing-rein by which it can be counteracted. It is due to faulty conformation or bad breaking, or both.

A Spoiled Pony is one that has failed, for some reason or other, to "school" for polo. Such a pony might make an attractive and successful hack or lightweight hunter if the point at which he has failed is a stage beyond the requirements of a hack or hunter. Unfortunately, however, such an animal is sometimes offered by the unscrupulous as an entirely "green" pony, either just broken in to ride, or, if young

STAR-GAZING IS USUALLY DUE TO FAULTY CONFORMATION.

enough, as an entirely unbroken one. In the former case the purchaser is asked when trying him not to do more than ride him in the simplest way, and in the latter he can, of course, only see the animal on the lunge-rein (see "Hints on the Purchase of Horses").

Quiet with Hounds.—It is remarkable that all horses are curiously affected by the presence of hounds. There is nearly always *some* change of character, but sometimes it is so marked that a horse which is a pleasant hack may be almost unridable in the hunting-field, and further, an idle, placid, or slovenly hack may become animated into a bright and keen hunter by the arrival of the pack at a meet. Most horses love hounds and hunting, but there are just a few that hate it. This marked interest, and the resultant change of character, is difficult to account for, as I have often known it manifest itself in a newly broken four-year-old that sees hounds for the first time. It is of great importance to bear this peculiarity in mind when trying a horse for hunting (see "Hints on the Purchase of Horses").

Forging is the striking of the inside of the fore shoe with the outside of the hind shoe—an irritating habit sometimes so persistent as to give the impression that the horse is doing it on purpose and is deriving some pleasure from the sound. It is often due to debility or want of condition, sometimes to a general sluggish temperament. Often a horse will forge when proceeding in a direction away from the stables and cease when his head is turned homewards. The company of other horses may animate him so that he ceases to forge. *A horse that is broken and carries himself correctly* will seldom practise this annoying trick. Some will begin to forge as they tire.

Freshness (getting above himself) is the exuberance caused by overfeeding. If a horse is given food in excess of what is warranted by his work, it has an effect on him akin to mild intoxication. The horse seldom uses this exuberance to perform his allotted task with greater efficiency, but invariably gets rid of this superfluous energy by rebellion and aggression pushed beyond the point which would be considered reasonable, having regard to the animal's education and previous performance. Among the means employed we can include any of the following or combinations of them: Shying, bucking, refusing, rearing, kicking, pulling, napping, and biting.

We can neglect the natural exhilaration of a normal, healthy horse, fresh out of the stable, but real freshness causes some curious change of character which would be more difficult to understand were it not invariably an exaggeration of each horse's particular idiosyncrasy, which the trained observer will notice when the horse is in a normal condition. Let a horse indicate a vice or peculiarity when exhibited for sale, and therefore, when all circumstances favour the best show he

can give, and we may be quite sure that that particular vice or peculiarity will be accentuated when the horse is corn fed, and probably accentuated beyond the safety-line unless he is kept under by work in proportion to his corn, or corn in proportion to his work.

This question of feeding is a complicated one. On the one hand we have to get our horse strong and muscular, and on the other to bear in mind that it often entails more work than legs can stand to counteract the effects of overfeeding. It is a vital question to the breaker, although hunting-men attach less importance to it. A common method employed in conditioning hunters is to give them as much corn as they will eat. I know several stables where this is the régime. One can imagine a man spending the summer undergoing a rest-cure on a vegetarian diet and, in order to prepare himself for a strenuous athletic winter, trying how much stimulating food he can eat during September and October. This is what such a preparation as I have described amounts to. We have to take into consideration the condition of the horse we are going to break and school, and unless we carefully regulate his diet, we are going to prolong his breaking and complicate it by the confusion which must arise in separating in our minds what is due to freshness and what we can put down to the ordinary defences of a horse resisting control.

I am very much averse to schooling a horse that is overfresh, as at the best it is impossible to gain his attention, and the exercise to bring him into a receptive frame of mind should be something different from his school work. Also it should be carried out in a different place from the schooling-ground, and preferably by a different man. For instance, a good plan would be to have a horse driven for half an hour in the long reins by the groom before the breaker mounts him for his lesson. With some horses a long hack out answers better; others are best calmed down by a protracted ride about a farm. The best method is to make the actual lessons as short as possible, and having the horse well exercised first helps to shorten them.

Defences are the means adopted by the horse to defeat the wishes of its rider.

Lateral Equitation.—If the horse is already broken, to guide him by lateral equitation is bad riding, and it should only be used educationally as long as a horse is "green" or when he plays up and resists. If the horse's head is pulled by the rein to one side, and if simultaneously the rider's leg on the same side is used, this is lateral equitation.

Diagonal Equitation is the correct way to ride to produce the completely broken horse. It is the reverse of "lateral equitation." If the horse's head is pulled to one side, either by the action of the rein

JOGGING OUT IN HAND.

on the bit or by pressure of the rein on the neck, and if simultaneously the rider's leg on the *opposite* side is used, this is "diagonal equitation." The next step to this is that the horse will be "bridle-wise."

LUNGING is making a horse circle on a single long (twenty-two feet) rein, made of light webbing, buckled to the nose-band or to one side of the bit. It is held by a man standing in the centre of the circle. It is useful if we wish to observe the action, paces, and wind of an unbroken horse, and also sometimes to reduce a refractory and overfed horse to submission by fatigue without endangering a rider. I do not advocate lunging; long-rein driving is a safer method and has the further advantage of being educational.

"HAUTE ECOLE" RIDING is teaching and practising those circus airs and exercises which go beyond the bounds of utility. In this book I have not touched on the subject, but confined myself to horse-breaking for hunting and polo.

MOUTHING is accustoming a horse to carry a bit in his mouth with equanimity. If a horse's mouth goes dry it is either because the bit does not suit him or because he is not yet mouthed. If the horse foams at the mouth, this is also not as it should be, as it shows that he is using his tongue unduly to play with the bit. The mouth should always remain moist without frothing if the horse is mouthing correctly. The object of the keys on the breaking-bit is to induce the young horse to play with it and thereby to induce salivation, which keeps his mouth moist and sensitive.

JOGGING OUT IN HAND.—Although most of my readers will know what this is, it may be that all do not know the correct way to carry it out. There should be nothing in the horse's mouth more severe than the plain snaffle. The reins should be taken over the horse's head and held long, and there should be no saddle and no clothing on him. The groom should run quite slowly alongside the horse and induce him to proceed at the very slowest trot, with the reins hanging loose. The ground selected should be level and hard and free from loose stones; concrete or pavement is the best. At the end of the run the horse should be stopped as far as possible without interference with his mouth. If the groom stops and calls "Whoa!" he will find that the horse pulls up, too. He should then turn the horse away from him for the return run. By this means only can the observer tell whether a horse is sound or lame.

DISHING is a term used to describe a fault in action. It is confined to the fore legs. A horse is said to dish if, instead of bending his knee so as to bring his foot straight back, he bends it outwards (Fig. 76).

PLAITING (Fig. 77) is the reverse of dishing. In this the horse at the

trot bends his knee so as to turn the fore feet inwards, crosses them, and appears to be in danger, as indeed he is, of striking the opposite leg. If in addition to this fault he turns his toes out (Fig. 75) when standing, the danger will be increased. If he strikes himself just below the knee or hock it is called "speedy-cutting." If he strikes one fetlock with the

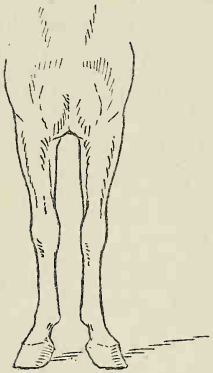


Fig. 75.
Toes turned out.

Fig. 76.
Dishing.

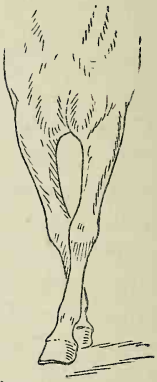


Fig. 77.
Plaiting.

opposite hoof it is called "brushing." If he strikes himself between the knee and the fetlock it is called "hitting."

The last three definitions may appear to have nothing to do with horse-breaking, but jogging out in hand is important after a strenuous lesson to see if a horse has remained sound; and if a horse dishes or plaits it will entail extra care in breaking, because of the liability to unsoundness mentioned above. Bandages or specially designed boots will be necessary in breaking such a horse, but it is better not to attempt very advanced schooling. A horse that speedy-cuts is dangerous and should not be ridden.

Breaking Out in the Stable.—A cold sweat sometimes breaks out on a horse after work, and only appears after he has dried, and usually some time after he has been dressed and rugged. It is a sign of agitation and that he has either been overworked or that he has been bullied by insistence on some exercise which he does not understand or for which he is unprepared through soft condition. If it is reported to me that a horse that I have been riding has "broken out in the stable," I blame my horsemanship.

It must not be confused with the ordinary sweating of a horse brought home hot. Except on cold days or when it is raining, a horse should

be walked for the last quarter of an hour; otherwise he may break out *immediately* he is put inside. As it takes time to dry such a horse, a considerate breaker will be careful to avoid bringing his horse home hot, but if it is raining it will be a help to his groom to trot the horse right into the yard, as this will hasten the drying process.

INDEX

Accidents, preventable, 137
Aggressiveness in the horse, 11
Aids, 74, 144
  diagonal, 37
  for stopping, 38
  for turning, 38
  instinctive use of, 39
  lateral, 37
  teaching a horse to obey the, 37
Antiquity of horse-breaking, 1
Approaching a fence, 72
Approval, love of, 11
Army riding schools, 2, 58
Ashley polo stick head, 94
Association of ideas, 9, 40
Auction sales, 127

Backhander, 91
Backs, sore, 132
Balance, 65
Bandages, 117
Bars of the mouth, 149
Bearing-rein, 20, 44, 139
Bearing-rein, adjustment of, 20
Bending course, 86
Biologist, the, 77
Bit, behind the, 83, 146
  change of, 34
  position in mouth of, 36
Bits and bitting, 32, 95
Bitting, theory of, 32
Blood to carry weight, 125
Blows, accidental, with the stick, 90
Boards, 88, 96
Bolting, 107
Boots, 117
Breaker, necessity for rider to be, 5
Breakfast, exercising before, 139
Breaking bit, 20
  necessity for step-by-step system, 5
  requirements for successful, 3
Breaking-out in the stable, 156
Breeder, the, 77
Bridle Wise, 42, 56, 148
Bridles and reins that button, 36
Bridling, 147
Brook, jumping a, 75
Brooke, Colonel Geoffrey, 3, 20
Bucking, 108

Canter, 53, 25
Cantering, disunited, 57
  falsely, 57
  games, 95
Centre, turn on the, 47
Change of leg at the canter, 54, 86
Characteristics, acquired, 77
  physical, 79
Cheshire martingale, 35
Circling in the school, 59
Click, 11, 21, 40
Clip, difficult to, 114
" Cloister," 74
Collection, 73, 147
Condition, 121
Conformation, suitable and unsuitable, 77
Co-operation between groom and employer, 140
Cow-kick, 46, 109
Cruelty in training and sport, 131
Curb bit, action of, 35
Cutting the corners, 41

Darwin, 78
Defences, 154
Diagonal equitation, 55
Diet, 114, 117
Direct flexion, 41, 48
Direction, change of, 59
Dishing, 155
Dismounting, 30
Dog and horse compared, 11, 14, 17
Dogs, the real secret of training, 14
Dollery, 74
Donkey, 7
Dublin Show, 3
Duration of a course of breaking, 13

Ease, love of, 9
Egg-butt joints, 32, 35
Elongated figure of eight, 59, 60, 85
Employers' liability, 115
Equilibrium, horizontal, 149
Equitation, diagonal, 37, 55, 154
  lateral, 37, 40, 42, 154
Euclid's first axiom, 78
Exercise, 114
Expense of polo, 6

Failures, polo pony, 121
Fence, riding at a, 72
Figures of eight, elongated, 59, 60
Fillis, 11, 103
First appearance on polo ground, 94
  appearance with hounds, 69
Flexion, direct, 42, 48, 63, 147
  lateral, 50, 63, 147
Foal, the, 16
Fondness for hunting, 9
  for polo questioned, 9
Fore-hand, turn on the, (dismounted) 45, (mounted) 48
Fore legs, infirm, 70
Forging, 153
Forward seat, the, 75
Foxe, Anne, 14
Freshness, 153

Galloping, 72, 97
Girthing, 17, 28
Grand National, 74
Gregarious instinct, 9, 68
Grooming, 117
Grooms as horse-breakers, 6
  character of, 115
  life of, 140
  training of, 135

Habit of obedience, the, 12
Hand, dropping the, 146
Hands, 145
Hanoverian Pelham, 33
Haute école, 50, 155
Hayes, H. M., 13, 14, 20, 79
Head, carriage of, 79
Heart-room, 80
Heel, 145
Height limit, 100, 125
Hereditary ailments, 78
Heredity, 78
Hirelings, 131, 139
Hocks, 80
  infirm, 70
  jumping round on the, 83
Homesick, 40
Horse dealers and buyers, 119
Horse Sense and Horse Mastership, 3, 20
Hounds, first appearance with, 69
Hunter as a hack, the, 63
  favourite, 62
  preliminary breaking of, 62
  the, 61
Hunting horn, effect of, 10, 11

Illogical treatment, 115
Illustrated horse-breaking, 13, 14, 20
Impatience of control, 77
Incline, 42, 58
Indoor polo ball, 93
Instinct of self-preservation, 7, 61, 71
Introducing pony to the game, 94
Ireland, horses from, 121, 122

Irish horses, 4
martingale, 35

Jibbing, 102, 151
Jogging instead of walking, 111
out in hand, 98, 140, 155
Jump, riding at a, 72
schooling to, 63
Jumping from a stand, 76
in cold blood, 66
schools, 67, 68
show, 3

Kicking, 108
in gateways, 63, 69

Larking over fences, 68
Lateral equitation, 37, 40, 42
flexion, 50
Leading correctly, 25, 39, 54, 151
the yearling, 17
Leg, 145
change of, at the canter, 25, 54
obedience to the, 45
pressure, 41
Lifting a horse, 72
Like tends to produce like, 79
Loins, 80
Long-rein driving, 19, 64, 66, 68, 139; duration of course, 27; tackle, 20
Long reins for exercising hunters, 19; on the high road, 26
Love of ease in the horse, 8
Lunging, 21, 64, 155

Manège, 21, 39
dimensions of a, 39, 58
Martingale, adjustment of the, 33
Cheshire, 35
Irish, 35
ring, 32, 33
standing, 34, 136
Mating, ideal, for polo pony, 79
Measuring, 100
Minehead, 132
Miniature games, 92
Mounting and dismounting, 46
preparation for, in the loose-box, 27
restlessness in, 29, 30
Mouth, 151
bars of the, 149
Mouthing, 19, 155
Mouths, sore, 132

Nappy, 102, 151
Necessity for a complete course of breaking, 3
for a rider to be a horse-breaker, 5
for a "step-by-step" system of breaking, 5
Neck, length of, in the polo pony, 79

Oats, crushing, 138
Obedience, habit of, 12
Open, riding in the, 52

Pan-genesis, 78
Passage, 48, 150
Pasterns, 80
Pelham, Sefton and Hanoverian, 33
Pet, making a, 17
Physical training, 39
Plaiting, 155
Playing ponies as brood mares, 77
Plunging, 108
Points of the Horse, the, 79
Point-to-points, 129
Polo in India and America, 127
Polo pony, conformation, its relation to temperament in the, 77
Pony character, 126
Port, the, 35
Preparation in the loose-box, 27
Pulling, 70, 146
Punishment, 13

Quiet with hounds, 153

Race horses, 3, 78
trainer of, 94

Rearing, 102
Reflex actions, 11
Refusing, 70, 110
  reasons for, 71
Rein back, 56
Requirements in breaking, 3
Restlessness at covert side, 63, 70
  in mounting, 30
Reward, 14
Riding at a fence, 72
  off, 87
"Riding Recollections," 76
Ring martingales, 32
Routine, 85
Running away, 108
Rushing fences, 62
Rustless steel, 35

Saddle, cold, 27
Saddlery, 99
Scarcity of horses and ponies, 129
School, dimensions for a, 39
  movements, 58
Schooling to stick and ball, 89
Seat, 65, 141
Seeking safety in flight, 7
Sefton Pelham, 33
Selling horses, 129
Sheep skin, 34
Shoeing, 98, 117, 139
  difficulty in, 114
Shoulders, 80
Show jumping, 3
  ring, training for the, 97
Shying, 151, 106
  off the ball, 91, 110
Slack rein, 65, 83
Slow starting, 82
Snaffle bridle, 25, 32, 65, 71
  Pelham, 99
  twisted, 33
Spoiled pony, 152
Spurs, 53, 145
Stable management, 114
Star-gazing, 32, 152
Staying power, 80
Strokes, difficult, 91
Surcingle, buckling the, 18
Swerving, 72

Take-off, sound, 63
Telephone and hunting, the, 63
Thoroughbreds, 125, 126
Throwing head up and down, 110
Timber, 71
Tongue over the bit, 36, 39, 110
Tracking true, 23, 25, 55
Trainers of race horses, 94
Trial, horses on, 127
Trot, the, 43, 97
Turn on the fore-hand, the, 44

Umpiring, 95
Unbroken horses, 129

Vagaries in jumping, 71
Varsities, riding at the, 2
Violinist and horse compared, 4
  and rider compared, 145
Vulcanite covered mouth, 33

Walk, the, 41, 97
War rations, 137
Watson, James, B.Sc., F.R.S.E., 78
Whip in jumping, the, 75
Whoa! 11, 21, 83
Whyte-Melville, 76
Winter at grass, 96, 132, 137
Wire, 71, 125
Women's hands, 145
Worry of horse-keeping, 135

Young horse, handling the, 16
  leading the, 16
  making a pet of the, 17

HECKMAN BINDERY
BOUND TO
APR 25 1940
PLEASE
N. MANCHESTER, IND.